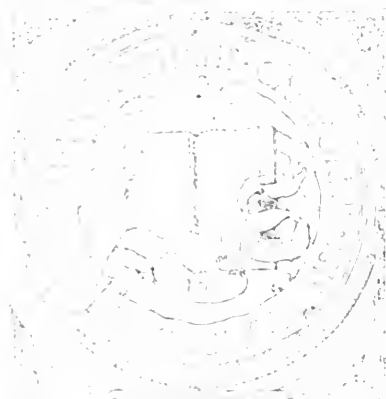


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THE BURIED TREASURE.

CHAPTER I.

GODFREY EVANS.

WAL, of all the dinners that ever a white man
sot down to, this yere is the beat !”

The speaker was Godfrey Evans—a tall, raw-boned man, dressed in a tattered, brown jean suit. He was barefooted, his toil-hardened hands and weather-beaten face were sadly soiled and begrimed, and his hair and whiskers looked as though they had never been made acquainted with a comb. As he spoke he drew an empty nail-keg from its corner, placed a board over the top of it, and seating himself, ran his eye over the slender stock of viands his wife had just placed on the table.

The man’s appearance was in strict keeping with his surroundings. The cabin in which he lived and everything it contained told of the most abject

poverty. The building, which was made of rough, unhewn logs, could boast of but one room and a loft, to which access was gained by a ladder fastened against the wall. It had no floor and no windows, all the light being admitted through a dilapidated door, which every gust of wind threatened to shake from its hinges, and the warmth being supplied by an immense fire-place with a stick chimney, which occupied nearly the whole of one end of the cabin. There were no chairs to be seen—the places of these useful articles being supplied by empty nail-kegs and blocks of wood; and neither were there any beds—a miserable “shake-down” in one corner being the best in this line that the cabin could afford. Everything looked as if it were about to fall to pieces. Even the rough board table on which the dinner was placed would have tumbled over, had it not been propped up against the wall.

Godfrey Evans had seen better days. He had once been comparatively well off in the world; but he had lost all his property through no fault of his own, and the loss so disheartened him that he would make no effort to accumulate more. At his time of life it was too late to begin again with empty hands, he said; so he accepted the situation, but with a very

bad grace, and spent the most of his time in roaming about the woods with his gun on his shoulder, and the rest in bemoaning his altered circumstances, and denouncing those of his neighbors who were more fortunate than himself.

Godfrey's family consisted of a wife and two sons—the latter aged respectively seventeen and fifteen years. His wife was a meek-faced woman who had seen a world of care and trouble, and who, while submitting patiently to her hard lot, hoped for better things, and placed unbounded confidence in her youngest son, David, who was animated by an energetic, manly spirit, which contrasted strangely with his father's indolence and indifference. Godfrey seemed content to pass the remainder of his days in that hovel, destitute of all the comforts, and even suffering for many of the necessities of life; but David was not. He had high aspirations, had formed plans, and, better than that, he had perseverance and pluck enough to carry them out. Of him and his brother, Daniel, we shall have more to say as our story progresses. It will be enough, now, to tell the reader that if they had been utter strangers, they could not have been more unlike each other. David was of a lively, cheerful disposition, and his entry

into the comfortless hovel he called home, was like a ray of sunshine bursting through a storm cloud. Daniel, on the other hand, was like his father, morose and sullen, and when he came home from the woods or the steamboat landing, where he spent the most of his time, it seemed as if a thunder cloud had suddenly settled down over the cabin.

Having drawn his nail-keg up to the table, Godfrey thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out his jack-knife, and picking up the fork that lay beside his broken plate, held the two close together and looked at them intently for several minutes. The fork was not such a fork as the most of us use at our meals. It was simply a piece of cane sharpened at one end; and perhaps this story will fall into the hands of some who can remember, or who have heard it said, that there was a time, not so very long ago, when a good many families in the South, who had all their lives been accustomed to something better, had their choice between employing their fingers at table, or using such an implement as this we have just described.

“Look at this yere, now,” said Godfrey, “jest look at it, I say, the hul on yer, an’ then ax yerselves if it aint a purty pass fur a man to come to, who had a nice house, a fine plantation and four niggers of his own, only twelve short years ago! Eh?”

"We can't help it, father," said Mrs. Evans, who knew that her angry husband expected her to say something. "We had comforts once, and we might have them now if—if——"

"Yes, in course we might, if them Yanks had stayed to hum, whar they belonged," Godfrey almost shouted. "We didn't do nothin' to them that they should come down here an' burn our houses an' cotton gins, an' steal our things, did we?"

"The Federals didn't do it all, father," said David. "They burned our buildings, just as they burned the buildings of almost every man who was in the rebel army; but we should have had enough left to get along with, if Redburn's guerillas had left us alone. They didn't leave us a bed to sleep on!"

"That's what makes me so pizen savage agin everybody," exclaimed Godfrey, pounding with the handle of his knife on the table. "The men what wore the same colored jacket as I did, came here and tuk what the Yanks left us. Why didn't they go up to Gordon's an' clean them out too? Kase Gordon was a gen'ral, that's why. That fuss was a rich man's war, an' a poor man's fight, that's jest what that fuss was; an' everybody can see it now that it is done past. Men like me had to stay in the ranks an' carry a

musket, an' starve an' freeze in the trenches—that's what we had to do; while rich planters, like Gordon, lived high in their tents, rode their fine hosses, stole the sanitary goods the Yanks sent to their fellers in Richmond, an' thought they was a fightin' for the 'federacy."

"Why, father, General Gordon was wounded no less than three times," said David.

"S'pose he was," replied Godfrey.

"An' while he was fighting the Feds in front of Richmond, some more of them came here and burned down his splendid house, that ours wouldn't have made a woodshed to, and stole everything his family had."

"No, they didn't do nothing of the kind," answered his father, almost savagely. "They burned his house, I know, an' sarved him right, too. I'm glad of it; but as fur stealin' everything the Gordons had, that ain't so. No 'taint. The gen'ral's got heaps an' stacks of money now."

"I don't believe it," said David, bluntly.

"If you want me to lay that cowhide over yer shoulders right peart, you jest conspute me that ar way onct more," said Godfrey, setting down his cup of buttermilk. "Whar did them speckled ponies

come from that Don and Bert ride around the country, I'd like to know, if the Gordons hain't got no money? I was up thar the other day when it rained so hard, an' the gen'ral, bein' mighty perlite, axed me would I come in an set till the storm was over. Wal, I went, an' what did I see? The fust thing I laid my eyes onto was a pianner that them gals thumps on when they had oughter be workin' in the kitchen. They was a settin' the table fur dinner, too; an' didn't I see silver forks thar, an' white-handled knives, an' chiny, an' all them things that would jest set me onto my feet agin if I had the money they cost? I did, I bet ye. Hain't got no money, hey, the Gordons hain't? I know better. They have, an' that's what makes me so pizen savage. How have they got any more right to have to nor I have? We both fit the Yanks, an' I made a poor man of myself by it, while the gen'ral is jest as well off as he ever was. Things ain't fixed right in this yere 'arth, no how!"

"Thar they come now," said Dan, who sat where he could look out of the door and up the road that led toward General Gordon's plantation. "Thar they come, ridin' them circus-hosses, and talkin' an' laughin' as though they was the happiest fellers in

the world. Everybody is happy 'ceptin' us. If I had what one of them ponies is wuth, I wouldn't have to wear no sich clothes as these yere," added Dan, raising his arm and pulling his sleeve around so that he could see the gaping rent in the elbow. "If I could run one of them hosses off an' sell it without being ketched, I'd do it to-night!"

"O, Daniel, don't talk so," said his mother quickly.

"An' why not, I'd like to know?" retorted Dan. "Has them fellers any right to go a gollopin' about the country on horseback, while I've got to hoof it all the while, an' go barefoot too?"

"No, they hain't," said Godfrey. "They've got jest as much right to hoof it as any of us; an' we've got the same right to ride on horseback that they has. We could do it onct, an' we'll do it agin! yes, we will, fur times is goin' to change with us, an' purty soon too. Now, don't forget what I'm tellin' ye; ye'll see the eyes of the Gordons, an' all the rest of the folks about here, a stickin' out as big as *that*," said Godfrey, flourishing his clenched hand over the table. "As big as that, I say, an' afore many days, too—p'rhaps next week!"

"What's goin' to happen, pop?" asked Dan.

“Something that’ll——”

Godfrey glanced out at the door, and seeing that the boys, whose approach had started the family on this subject of conversation, were near at hand, put on a very wise look and winked knowingly at his son, who was obliged to restrain his curiosity for the present.

We must stop here long enough to say a word concerning the new-comers, as it is possible that we shall often meet them hereafter. Their names were Donald and Hubert Gordon, and they lived about a mile from the cabin in which Godfrey Evans and his family lived. And in what part of the world was that? It doesn't much matter, for as there is more truth than fiction in some of the incidents we are about to describe, we do not care to go too much into details. It will be enough to say that the scene of our story is laid, and that all the actors therein lived, in one of our Southern States not very far from the Mississippi river. As our tale progresses some attentive reader, who has paid close attention to his history, may be able to locate the exact spot.

Two boys with more cheerful, happy dispositions than Don and Bert Gordon possessed, it would be hard to find anywhere. Don was sixteen years of

age and his brother one year younger. The former was a robust, manly youth, who took great delight in all out-of-doors sports, and who, like many other healthy youngsters, had some glaring faults that were the occasion of no little anxiety to his father and mother. One was his great propensity for mischief. He was not fond of books or school, but any wild scheme for "fun," as he called it, particularly if it involved some risk on the part of those who participated in it, would enlist his hearty sympathy and co-operation. This led to the most unpleasant episode in Don's life. He was a student at a certain high school in a neighboring city, and being thrown into the company of uneasy spirits like himself, he very soon so far forgot the solemn promises he had made his mother before leaving home, that he assisted in laying plans for mischief which others carried into execution. After that but little urging was necessary to induce him to take part in them himself; and being at last detected in some act that had been strictly forbidden, he was promptly expelled from the school.

It was wonderful what a change that made in Don Gordon. He began to see that his conduct was not calculated to gain and hold the respect of those whose

respect was worth having, and thus far his resolution to do better had been firmly adhered to. There is a turning point in everybody's existence—a time when a decision made affects one's whole after career—and who knows but this may have been the critical period in Don's life? It was not the disgrace attending his expulsion from school that awoke him, for that had a different effect. It made him spiteful and rebellious. It was the treatment he received after he reached home. Fortunately his father and mother were the kindest parents in the world, and the friendly talk they had with Don on the evening of the day he arrived at home, opened the young man's eyes; and every promise he made then had been faithfully kept. He and his brother were now prosecuting their studies at home under the direction of a private tutor who lived in the house with them.

Bert Gordon was not like his brother in anything except his appearance. His features resembled Don's, but instead of the latter's tough, wiry body, he had a slender little figure that could endure but trifling exposure and hardship, and a delicate constitution that had been badly shattered by the plague of that south-western region—the fever and ague. He took but little interest in the violent sports of which his

brother was so fond ; and if he had consulted his own inclinations, he would any day have chosen an easy-chair and a good book in preference to a morning's gallop. But the doctor insisted on daily exercise, and that was one reason why General Gordon had purchased the "speckled ponies" which were so obnoxious to Godfrey Evans and his son Dan.

The ponies were beauties, and Dan called them "circus hosses" because their color was piebald, like that of a performing steed he had once seen in a small show that stopped for a day at Rochdale, as the steam-boat-landing three miles distant was called. Their long, wavy manes reached to their knees, their tails swept the ground as they walked, and their favorite gait was an easy amble which scarcely moved their riders in the saddles. They were not fiery or swift enough to suit Don, who always went at a high-pressure rate, but they suited Bert very well. They would stand fire like old cavalry horses, and many a fine bunch of quails and squirrels had their owners shot from their backs.

As the boys came ambling along, talking and laughing with each other as though they felt at peace with themselves and all the world, the inmates of the cabin turned to look at them.

“Another dog,” growled Godfrey, as his eyes rested on a splendid young pointer that trotted along behind Don’s horse. “They’ve got a new dog every day. What it takes to keep them wuthless curs would make me rich!”

“They are not worthless curs,” said David, in a low tone. “They are fine hunting dogs, and the general has one that cost him a hundred dollars!”

“An’ the Gordons hain’t got no money, I think I heared ye say,” sneered his father. “How then can they buy dogs with a hundred dollars, I’d like to know?”

“Don’t talk so loud,” interrupted David. “You don’t want them to hear you, do you?”

“I don’t keer who hears me when I say——”

Just then there was a clatter of hoofs in front of the cabin, which ceased suddenly as the new-comers drew rein before the open door.

“Is David at—O, I beg pardon,” exclaimed a cheery voice. “We did not know you were at dinner. We will wait, as we are in no hurry.”

“I’m here, and ready to serve you any way I can,” said David, rising from the block of wood which served him for a chair. “I have finished my dinner.”

“All right,” said Don. “I’ve brought you a new

dog to break for me. Isn't he a beauty? He is a present from a friend living in Memphis. He is five months old, and as I found him standing the chickens in the yard this morning, I think it high time he was taught something. I'll give you what I promised, and what we gave you for breaking the others."

While Don was speaking, Godfrey, who sat within reach of his son, turned about on his barrel and slyly pulled David by the sleeve of his coat; but the boy paid no attention to him—that is, he did not look at him. But he did pull his sleeve out of his father's grasp, and move toward the other side of the door out of reach.

"I'll do the best I can with him," said David.

"And that will be as well as anybody can do," returned Don. "We will leave him in your charge and I hope the next time I see him, I can take him to the field for a good day's sport. Take the best of care of him, for he is a valuable animal."

David caught the pointer by a collar he wore around his neck, and led him behind the cabin to a kennel he had there, while the brothers, after lifting their hats to Mrs. Evans, turned about and galloped away.

"You're a purty son, you are," said Godfrey, as

David, having secured the pointer, came back and seated himself on his block of wood again. "Didn't yer feel me a pullin' an' a haulin' at yer coat, an' tryin' to tell yer not to promise to break that pup fur them 'ristocrats?"

"I did," answered David.

"Then why didn't ye pay some heed to it?"

"Because I want the ten dollars—that's why."

"Ten dollars!" repeated Godfrey, opening his eyes. "Is that what yer goin' to get fur it? It's a heap of money fur a boy like you to make so easy, an' that's just what makes me 'spise them Gordons so. They've got ten dollars to pay fur breakin' a pup that haint wuth his salt, an' I haint got ten cents to buy grub with. Just look at this yere!"

Godfrey went on moving his jack-knife over the table which was supplied with nothing but corn bread, fat bacon and buttermilk in the way of eatables and drinkables.

"Now aint this a purty mess for a white man an' a gentleman to set down to? If I couldn't remember the time when things was different, it wouldn't be nigh so hard; but I can. 'Taint so very long ago that we had fresh meat, an' coffee, an' pies, an' cakes, an' light bread fur grub, an' I had a pipe of store

tobacker to smoke arter eatin' it; but now—dog-gone sich luck!" cried Godfrey, striking the table such a blow with his open hand that the dishes jumped into the air, and the cracked pitcher, which held what was left of the buttermilk, fell in pieces, allowing its contents to run out among the plates.

"Thar's something else gone up," said Godfrey, his anger appeased for the moment by the sight of the ruins of the pitcher. "An' I haint got no stamps to buy another. Dave, I don't keer if ye be goin' to get ten dollars fur it, don't ye tech that pinter pup 'ceptin' to tote him back where he belongs. Do ye hear?"

"I reckon I do," replied David.

"Wal, be ye goin' to mind what I say to ye?"

"No, I aint."

"Ye haint? I say to ye, boy," exclaimed Godfrey, raising his hand over the table again, "boy, I say to ye——"

"Now, pop, don't break no more dishes," interrupted Dan, "'kase if ye do, we'll have to eat off'n bark plates purty soon, an' drink out'n gourds. Let Dave break the pinter pup if he wants to. What odds does it make to you?"

"It makes a heap of odds, the fust thing ye know,"

replied his father. "Kase they's 'ristocrats, an' we've got just as good a right to have ten dollars to pay somebody fur breakin' our huntin' dogs, as they have. An' 'sides, don't they make things wuss fur poor folks like us nor they'd oughter? They do, an' this is the way they go about it: Look at them pack of hound dogs they brought down from Kaintuck last summer! I don't say nothing about the money they throwed away when they bought 'em, an' which was more'n enough to keep all our jaws a waggin' fur one good year, I bet ye, an' on good grub too, but I jest axes ye, what's them hound dogs fur? Why just as soon as the leaves begin to fall, them youngsters will take to the swamps, an' them hound dogs will go a tearin' an' a yelpin' through these woods at sich a rate, that the fust thing we know the game will all be done drove out of the country, an' we can't get nu deer nor bar meat fur grub. That's what makes me 'spise them hound dogs so."

These remarks of his father's recalled to Dan's mind an incident that had happened during the previous spring. He brightened up suddenly as if he were thinking of something that afforded him infinite satisfaction.

CHAPTER II.

GODFREY BUILDS AIR-CASTLES.

THEM hound dogs needn't worry you none," said Dan. "I'll take keer of them!"

"What be ye goin' to do?" asked his father.

"I'm goin' to make them two fellers what owns 'em promise to let my things they finds in the woods alone, or——"

Here Dan glanced hastily at his brother. David was looking intently at his plate, but the expression on his face told that he was listening with all his ears. So Dan did not finish the sentence, but raised his hand to his face and shut one eye as if he were glancing along the barrel of a rifle.

"Goin' to shoot 'em, be ye?" exclaimed his father. "Wal, say so then, and don't be afraid. Nobody ain't agoin' to harm ye fur it."

"Yes," said Dan doggedly, seeing that his secret was out. "I'm goin' to shoot 'em!"

"You hadn't better stay about here after you do

it," said David. "The general will have the law on you."

"How'll he find out who done it, I'd like to know?" snapped his brother. "An', 'sides, hain't I got jest as much right to spile his things as his boys have to spile mine? Didn't I meet 'em one day last spring as they were ridin' out of the woods on them circus hosses of their'n, an' didn't they tell me that they'd pulled down more'n a dozen turkey traps they'd found among the hills, kase it was agin the law, or, if it wasn't it had oughter be, to ketch turkeys at that time of the year? An' didn't I go straight to the woods when I left them, an' didn't I find that it was my own traps they had pulled down? You're right I did; an' I said then that I'd get even with 'em some day fur that same piece of work. You want to keep a close eye on that pinter pup," he added shaking a warning finger at his brother.

"I believe you," answered David. "A fellow who will take revenge on a dumb brute for something his owner did to him, is mean enough for anything, and perhaps I had better take good care of myself, too. If you intend to hurt the dog say so, and I will take him back where he belongs."

"Wal, seein' it's you, I wont tech him," said Dan,

with more eagerness and haste than the circumstances seemed to warrant. "But arter his owner gets him in his hands, he wants to watch out. Now, pop," added Dan, seeing that his father was about to speak, "don't you go to raisin' a row. Let Dave break the dog, if he wants to. It don't cost you nothing. What did you mean when you said a little while ago that things is a goin' to change with us?"

Godfrey's face lost its angry scowl and brightened at once.

"I meant something that'll extonish ye when ye hear it—the hul on ye," he replied, with a cheerful wink at his hopeful son, "an' it won't take me long to tell it, nuther. You remember that when the war fust broke out, Gen'ral Gordon, knowin' which side of his bread had the butter onto it, got all his money changed into gold and silver, and brought it here to his house an' hid it, don't ye?"

Of course the family all remembered it. The incident had offered gossip for the neighborhood for months after it happened.

"Wal," continued Godfrey, "when the Yanks come in here, them gold and silver dollars, an' all the watches belongin' to the family, an' all the silver an' chiny dishes, an' them gold things Mrs. Gordon

an' her gals wore around their wrists, was done took an' hid. They was buried in the ground, some in one place an' some in another, so't the Yanks couldn't find 'em. Mrs. Gordon an' her gals buried some of 'em with their own hands, among the flower-beds in front of the place whar the house then stood, an' one of the niggers, ole Jordan—ye remember him, I reckon—done buried the rest. I know, kase Jordan told me so hisself. Jordan, ye know, was raised by the gen'ral's father from the time he was a picaninny, an' bein' as honest as a nigger ever gets to be, his missus she sot a heap of store by him, an' said thar wasn't no better servant a goin'.

“Wal, when the gen'ral's wife, she heared that the Yanks was a comin' with them gunboats of their'n, she sent fur Jordan an' she says to him: ‘Jordan, you see that thar bar'l? Thar's eighty thousand dollars in gold an' silver into it. Now, Jordan, you take that thar bar'l, an' tote it off as quick as you can, an' hide it in the ground, an' remember an' don't let nobody see ye, an' don't say nothin' to nobody, nuther.’ So Jordan he done tuk the bar'l an' rolled it down to the tater patch, and digged a hole as quick as he could an' kivered it up, an' nobody, not even the missus, don't know whar he put it!”

Here Godfrey paused to take breath, and leaning his elbows on the table, looked from one to the other of the little group before him to see what they thought about it.

“Wal, what of it?” said Dan, who was the first to speak.

“What of it?” repeated his father. “Thar’s a heap of it, the fust thing you know—a hul bar’l full; an’ what’s to hinder us from gettin’ it fur our own, I’d like to know?”

A gleam of intelligence shot across Dan’s swarthy face, and even David and his mother looked up and began to take some interest in what Godfrey was saying.

“Jordan went off with the Yanks that very night, an’ he hasn’t been seed since,” Godfrey went on. “That was ten year ago, come next winter, an’ nobody don’t know whar that bar’l with the eighty thousand in gold and silver is. I was to hum on a furlong then, ye know, an’ kept hid in the cane while the Yanks was here; but I seed Jordan, an’ he told me that the bar’l was in the tater patch. I jest happened to think of it this mornin’ while I was a huntin’ in the swamp; an’ then I axed myself, wasn’t I a dunce to be livin’ in this way, when thar was eighty

thousand dollars to be had fur the diggin' ? An' I told myself yes, I was. So I come hum right quick, an' I'm done huntin' fur a livin' now !"

"Are you going to look fur that barrel, father ?" asked David.

"I aint a goin' to do nothing else. I know right whar that tater patch was, an' me an' Dan 'll dig it so full of holes that the folks up to Gordon's house will think an army is goin' to build a fort thar."

"And what will you do with it if you find it ?"

"What'll I do with it ?" cried Godfrey, rising to his feet, spreading out his arms and turning slowly around so that his son could have a good view of him. "Can you look at me an' all of us an' ax me what I'll do with it ? I'll keep it fur myself, an' spend it like a lord, too !"

"Would you like to have somebody serve you that way ?" asked David. "It wouldn't be honest."

"Honest !" Godfrey almost screamed. "Jest listen to him, now ! That's what makes me 'spise thein Gordons so. They can't keep their big 'ristocratic ideas to their selves, but must tell 'em to my boys, an' larn one of 'em to say 'father' an' 'mother,' 'stead of callin' us 'pop' an' 'mam,' like he had oughter do. An' then to talk about my spendin' my

time a diggin' an' a huntin' fur that thar bar'l, an' arter findin' it, to give it up to them as has got more'n their share already, an' here's us as poor as Job's turkey! No, sir," said Godfrey, emphatically. "If I find that thar bar'l I'll keep it, an' say nothing to nobody."

"But it belongs to the Gordons," said David, not at all daunted by his father's speech, "and you have no right to lay a finger on it."

"Wal, you'll see if I don't lay two whole hands onto it if I can find it; an' if I don't find it, it won't be kase I don't do no diggin', I bet ye. Jest think of it," said Godfrey, growing animated over the prospect of so great and sudden wealth. "Here's us been a livin' like the pigs in the gutter all these years, when we might have been ridin' our own hosses an' growin' fat off the best kind of grub! Eighty thousand dollars! Enough to fill a hul bar'l! Why, one day, in the good old times, when I was a talkin' with the gen'ral, he says to me: 'Godfrey, how much is you wuth?' Wal, I didn't know, kase I hadn't never thought of it none; but I told him I had so many niggers, wuth so much a head; so many cow brutes; so many hoss an' mule brutes; so much land; an' so many pig brutes runnin' in the swamp. The

gen'ral he figures it up, an' tells me I wus wuth nigh on to twelve or fifteen thousand dollars, most likely it was nigher fifteen nor twelve. I tell you I felt big arter that. I held my head up high, like a steer in the corn, an' felt like axin' every man I met did he know I wus wuth fifteen thousand dollars, an' it all made with these yer two hands, too? But *eighty* thousand! Whew! Why didn't I think of that bar'l long ago? I reckon I'll go down to the landin' an' ax Silas Jones will he trust me fur some store tobacker. I can tell him that I'll be able to buy his hul consarn out next week!"

As Godfrey said this he arose from his barrel, and, taking his rifle down from its place over the door, went out of the cabin followed by Dan, who also carried a rifle on his shoulder. David and his mother watched them in silence until they had passed down the road out of sight, and then turned and looked at each other.

"Is it true about the barrel?" asked the boy at length.

"I am sure I don't know," was his mother's answer, "and for the sake of all concerned I hope it is not. It is true that all the gold and silver, and other valuables belonging to the Gordon family, were bur-

ied on the night the levee was cut, and it is equally true that Jordan buried some of it. He went down the Pass with the gunboats when they left, and has never been seen or heard of since. What has become of him, nobody knows; and whether he went without telling Mrs. Gordon where he had hidden the valuables, is a question that no one outside the general's family is able to answer. It may be possible that he did, for such things have happened."

"When and where?" asked David.

"Right here in this neighborhood. After the war was over, and the soldiers began to return, there came to this landing a man named Brown, who had been a sailor on one of the Union gunboats. He did not look like a person who had more money than he wanted, but he said he had, and that his object in coming here was to rent a plantation and go to raising cotton. As almost everybody was ready to sell or rent, several plantations were offered him, but the only one he would look at was Colonel Cisco's—an old worn-out place that no one else would have as a gift. The widow—the colonel was killed in the army, you know—was glad to get the hundred dollars Mr. Brown offered her to bind the bargain, and let him have the place at once. He said he could do nothing

until his partner came from Memphis with the mules, provisions and other things needed to carry on plantations ; but he took possession of the house, and lived there two months all by himself. He was never seen during the daytime. He visited none of the neighbors, and didn't seem to want to have anybody call on him ; but people went all the same, and one day somebody found out that the flower-beds in the back yard, on which Mrs. Cisco had spent so much time, had all been dug up, and that there was a hole there that one could bury a house in. The man didn't like it at all because it had been found out, and said he was digging a cellar. It was discovered afterward, however, that all this work had been done in the night, and that Mr. Brown never thought of putting a cellar there."

"What did he intend to put there then?" asked David, when his mother paused.

"Nothing. He hoped to take something out ; but he was taken sick, and that was the end of his scheme. He had such a hard time getting well, that when he was able to be about again, he made up his mind that he had seen enough of the South, and that he would go home at once and stay there. He wanted to do something for the people who had been so kind

to him during his sickness, so he took the man who had done the most for him into his secret, and told him what had brought him there. In the first place he had no partner, no money—only just enough to pay his railroad and steamboat fare to the place where he wanted to go—and no intention of cultivating the plantation. There was money buried somewhere near the house—he wanted it, and this was the way he found out about it:

“Attached to the same gunboat to which Mr. Brown belonged was a negro, who had once been Colonel Cisco’s house servant. During the war the colonel’s family hid all their valuables in the ground, just as all our people did who had anything to hide, and this servant helped them bury money and silver, to the amount of thirty thousand dollars and over. After he ran away and got on the gunboat, he told about it, and boasted that when the war closed he would soon make a rich man of himself; but he was taken sick, and this Mr. Brown, who was the doctor’s steward, took care of him. Before he died he told the steward about the buried money, and described the place where it was hidden so accurately that Mr. Brown could have found it in the darkest of nights. That was what made him hire the Cisco plantation.”

“Well, did he get the money?” asked David, who was deeply interested.

“People think not. If he had found it, he would not have been likely to say anything about it; and besides he would have had more than enough to take him home.”

“Didn’t Mrs. Cisco ever say anything about it?”

“Yes, and laughed at the man for his pains. Her husband had money once, she said, and buried some of it a dozen different times; but it was dug up again as soon as the danger of losing it had passed, and what they didn’t use was stolen from them by the guerillas. She’s now almost as poor as ourselves, Mrs. Cisco is. Her house was not burned, and in that respect only is she better off than we are.”

“We were rich once, were we not, mother?”

“No, we were not rich, but we had enough. Your father owned a mile square of land that was all paid for—he’s got that yet, but it don’t seem to do him any good, for the clearings have all grown up to briars—and we had a good house and plenty to eat and wear. He was a hard-working, saving man then, and so different from what he is now, that I sometimes think that somebody else has come to me from the southern army, and is passing himself off for Godfrey.

We were happy in those days," said Mrs. Evans, gazing earnestly into the little pile of coals on the hearth, as if the scenes she so well remembered were clearly pictured there. "I can remember when our cotton gin was kept running night and day; and I have seen eight four-horse teams going up the road toward the landing loaded with your father's cotton. You can't remember anything about it, for you were too young at the time."

"No," said David, "but I can remember when we lived in that brush shantee that had a fire burning in front of it night and day; and I can remember of seeing you cry, and father walking up and down and swinging his arms as if he were crazy."

"That was just after we were burned out. You were four years old then. Until that time we never thought we should feel much of the war. Although we were only eight miles from the river, we used to feel perfectly safe, so far as the Federals were concerned. We used to see Redburn's guerillas about once a week, but they belonged to our own side, and at first we did not stand in any fear of them, although we soon learned to dread them more than we did the Yankees. We never were afraid that they would hurt us, but they stole everything they could lay

their hands on, and finally got so bad that General Imboden sent them word that if they didn't do better he would come in with a regiment and wipe them off the face of the earth. We never thought that the Federals would get in here, and you don't know how frightened we were when we found that in a few days their gunboats would be at our very doors. One day in February—that was in '63—the Union soldiers came down from Helena and cut the levee. The water was high in the river, and it ran down through the pass and into Diamond lake here, and overflowed the bottoms until we thought it would drown us all. Then the gunboats came—two big iron-clads, a lot of tin-clads, and six thousand soldiers. They stopped here long enough to burn every dwelling-house and cotton-gin in the country for miles around, and then went on down the pass. Your father was at home then on a furlough, and I tell you they came pretty near catching him!”

“How was it?” asked David, who never grew weary of listening to the story, although he had heard it probably a score of times.

CHAPTER III.

DAN'S STRATEGY.

IT happened one day while we were at dinner," replied his mother. "The Union soldiers had been at work on the levee for two or three days, and we were expecting the boats through every hour. Godfrey kept his saddle on his horse night and day, and his weapons close at hand, so that he could catch them up at any moment. While we were eating dinner on this particular day, your father, who sat opposite the window, looked up all of a sudden, and before I could ask him the reason for his pale face, he was on his feet and out at the door. I looked through the window, and right here in our lake, and not fifty yards from the door, was the first gunboat I had ever seen. The Federals had got through the levee at last, and one of their boats, being of that sort which don't make any noise when they run, was right upon us before we knew it. I don't know her name to this day, but she had the figure 9 painted

on her pilot house, and I could see the cannons sticking out of the port-holes. On her upper deck were a lot of cotton bales placed like breastworks, and behind these cotton bales were fifty or sixty men, all with muskets in their hands, and watching and waiting for a chance to shoot at somebody. Well, they found that chance as soon as your father was fairly out at the door. Two jumps brought him to his horse which was hitched in the yard, another put him in the saddle, and in a minute more he was running the gauntlet."

"Wasn't it strange that he escaped being hit?"

"It was providential," replied Mrs. Evans. "I have heard Godfrey himself say that he could have shot a squirrel's eye out at the distance he was from the gunboat. They began to shoot at him as soon as he left the house, and I sat there and looked through the window and saw them do it. They fired as fast as they could get a sight at him, and the guns popped so rapidly that they reminded me of a burning cane-brake. When they stopped, I managed to get up and go to the door. There was a big cotton field where this brier patch is now, and it was half a mile wide. On the other side of it was a rail fence that ran between the field and the woods, and there I saw

Godfrey's white horse. I thought at first that Godfrey wasn't with him, but he was. He was leaning over and throwing the top rails off the fence. When he had done that, he straightened up, and seeing me standing in the door, he waived his hat to let me know that he was safe. Then he jumped his horse over the fence into the woods, and rode away out of sight.

“At that minute you and Daniel began to cry, and when I turned about to see what the matter was, I found the road blue with Federals. The boat had landed in front of the house, and a party was coming off with an officer. They entered without ceremony, and asked me who it was that rode off on that white horse, and if I knew where there were any weapons. I told them that he was my husband and your father, and that he had taken all the weapons with him. They evidently did not believe the last statement, for they searched every room in the house, and tumbled things about at a great rate; but they didn't break anything, and all I missed after they were gone was your father's picture which he had just had taken for me in Rochdale.

“Having satisfied themselves that there were no weapons in the house, the sailors went back to the

boat, which moved off into the lake, and went down the Pass toward Coldwater. I was glad when they were gone, and glad too to be let off so easily, for I had been told that these gunboat men were awful fellows; but they never troubled us, although we saw hundreds of them afterward. It was the soldiers that did the damage and our experience with them began the very next day. A transport loaded with them came into the lake, and the soldiers camped on our plantation. When they first came, we had cows, pigs, chickens and milk and butter; but in less than an hour we had none of these things left, and but little furniture. They took the rocking-chairs out to sit in beside their camp-fires, and broke the tables, washstands and bureaus up into firewood, when there were plenty of fence-rails to be had for the taking. Then one of them said there wasn't light enough for them to eat by, but he'd soon have more; and he did; for he pulled a straw bed into the middle of one of the rooms and touched a match to it.

“How I lived through that night I don't know. When morning came the house was gone and so were the soldiers; and I was turned out of doors with two little children to take care of. Your father came back as soon as the soldiers were all out of sight, and

threw up a little brush shantee, that we lived in, until some of the neighbors could get together and build us some better shelter. They put up this cabin for us, and after we had time to collect the clothing and furniture the soldiers had left us, we found that we were not so badly off after all. But the war was hardly more than half through then, and we had a good deal to stand before peace was declared. The guerillas came next, and you see just what they left us. I thought things would go better with us when your father came home, but somehow they didn't. Times have been growing harder instead of better. We're getting poorer and poorer every year, and mercy knows what's going to become of us!"

"Well, it's one comfort to know that we can't be much worse off than we are now," said David. "It isn't possible. But keep up a good heart, mother. I've got some news for you, and it's better than that barrel business too, for it's honest. I have a chance to make a hundred and fifty dollars."

Mrs. Evans opened her eyes and looked at David without speaking.

"It's a fact," said the boy, "and Don Gordon is the one who put me in the way to do it. You know his father takes lots of papers, and among them is

the *Rod and Gun*, which tells all about fishing and hunting. Well, Don was reading this paper the other day, and he found in it an advertisement asking for live quail—fifty dozen of them. He showed it to me last night, and asked me why couldn't I catch them and send them to the man."

"Who wants them, and what is he going to do with them after he gets them?" asked Mrs. Evans.

"O, somebody up North wants 'em. Don says they had a hard time up there last winter. The weather was awful cold, the snow was so deep that the birds couldn't get anything to eat, and the quail all died. This man belongs to some kind of a club—a 'sportsman's club,' I think Don called it—and he wants these quail to stock the country again. When he gets them, he's going to turn them loose and let them go. He offers three dollars and a half a dozen. Don says it will cost something to send them there, but that I can make three dollars on every dozen just as easy as falling off a log. Say, mother, don't say anything to father or Dan about it, will you?"

Mrs. Evans promised that she would not.

"You see," added David, by way of explanation, "they always want me to divide when I've got any money, but they never say a word about sharing

with me when they have any. Besides, what they get never does anybody any good, not even themselves; and, mother, if I get this hundred and fifty, I want it to do you some good. You need stockings, and shoes, and a new dress."

Mrs. Evans placed her hand tenderly on the boy's head, and told herself that if all her family cared as much for her comfort as he did, she would fare better.

"Do you think you can catch so many?" she asked. "Fifty dozen is a large number."

"I know it, but just see what I've done already. Last winter, when we were so poor that nobody would trust us for anything to eat, and we couldn't raise money to buy powder and shot to shoot game with, I kept the family in food, didn't I?"

Mrs. Evans remembered it perfectly, and knew that providing the family with something to eat was not all this fifteen year old boy had done during that hard winter. By the aid of his traps he had kept his mother comfortably clothed, and it was seldom indeed that he could not produce a dollar for the purchase of such luxuries as tea and coffee.

"Well," continued David, "one trap did it all. It caught just as many quail as we could eat and sell. One day I took twenty-seven out of it. This winter

I shall set a dozen traps, and suppose I catch five a day in each one of them ! If I do, it will take me just ten days to fill the order."

" But wouldn't it first be a good plan to write to this man and make a bargain with him ? Suppose somebody traps and sends him the fifty dozen before you do ?"

" O, that's all provided for. Don said he would write to the man last night, and I shall not begin until I hear from him. One hundred and fifty dollars for the quail, and ten dollars for breaking the pointer. One hundred and sixty dollars in all. That will help us through the winter, and if father and Dan would only do something to bring in as much more, we'd get along well enough. But I must be off to the fields now, mother. I'll have a quail for your supper, sure."

As David said this he took a rusty, single barrel shot gun down from some hooks over the door, threw a miserable apology for a game bag over his shoulder, kissed his mother and went out of the cabin. He unfastened the pointer, and with the animal trotting contentedly at his heels, made his way through the brier-patch toward the nearest open field.

" There's one thing I didn't tell mother," thought

David, "and that is, I can get ten dollars just as soon as I have a mind to ask for it. It will take perhaps two months to break this dog so that he will work even passably well in the field; but I needn't wait that long for the money, because Don told me I could have it whenever I wanted it. You see he isn't afraid to trust me. If it wasn't for the looks of the thing I'd ask him for it this very afternoon. But I'll wait a day or two, and then won't I astonish mother with the bundle of things I'll bring her from the store? Dan and father shan't see a cent of it, and neither will I spend any of it on myself. Mother needs it more than anybody else, and she shall have it all. Hallo!" exclaimed David, as the little piping note of warning the quail utters when suddenly disturbed, fell on his ear. "Come here, pup—I declare, I forgot to ask your master what your name is—come here, and let's see how much or how little you know!"

David was standing close beside a fence which ran between the brier-patch and a stubble-field. He looked over into the field when he heard the notes of warning, and saw a flock of quails running through the stubble, and directing their course toward a little thicket of bushes that grew on the banks of

a bayou near by. Had Dan Evans been there with that shot gun in his hands, he would have blazed away at once, and could hardly have failed to kill or wound three or four of the flock, so closely were they huddled together. That was the kind of a hunter Dan was ; but David, having learned what he knew of bird shooting from Don Gordon, who was a thoroughbred young sportsman, would have allowed the game to go off scot free before he would have made a "pot shot" at them. Shooting on the wing requires skill on the part of the hunter, and gives the game the best chance for its life ; and this was the method David always adopted. He lifted the pup over the fence, got over himself, and with a waive of his hand and a "Hie on, old boy !" walked toward the spot where the flock had last been seen.

The dog seemed to understand him perfectly, and was off like a shot. Of course he would not quarter the ground in obedience to a motion of the boy's hand—he had not learned that yet—but he searched the stubble thoroughly, and when he struck the trail of the running flock, he began to follow it up like an old dog. Suddenly he stopped and stood as motionless as if he had been turned into stone. He was pointing a quail hidden in the stubble almost under

his nose. David walked up, flushed the bird, and when it was in the air stopped it as neatly with his old rusty gun as any champion shot could have done it. Then the training of the dog began. He did not drop to shot nor did he come to heel when ordered to do so ; and these things, together with many others, must be taught him before he could be called an educated bird dog. With perfect confidence in David's ability to break him to his owner's entire satisfaction, we will leave him to the enjoyment of his afternoon's sport, and go back to Godfrey and Dan, whom we left walking down the road toward the steamboat landing.

"I say, Dan," exclaimed Godfrey, as soon as they were out of hearing of David and his mother, "ye wouldn't mind goin' over to the gen'ral's an' axin' some of his niggers fur the loan of a shovel fur a few days, would ye? We hain't got nothin' to dig up that thar bar'l with. Ye needn't mind tellin' what we want it fur, ye know. If anybody axes ye, ye might say yer mother's poorly from the fever'n ager, an' ye want to dig up some yarbs to make her some tea."

"All right," said Dan. "I'll go."

"I wish I had a dollar," continued his father.

“Thar’s goin’ to be a shootin’ match fur beef down to the landin’ this arternoon, an’ if I could go in, I’d be a’most sartin to win one of the hind-quarters. Thar hain’t many can beat me shootin’, thar hain’t.”

“I reckon mebbe I mought find a dollar fur ye, if ye’ll promise honor bright to pay it back to me,” said Dan.

“Ye’ll find a dollar fur me?” exclaimed his father, opening his eyes in amazement. “Whar?”

“Wal, now, it don’t make no odds to ye whar I git it, so long as I git it, does it?” asked Dan.

“Nary time,” replied his father, suddenly stopping in the road and extending his hand to his son. “Ye allers was a good boy, Dannie, an’ fur downright ‘cuteness an’ smartness I’ll match ye agin them book-larnt fellers up to the gen’ral’s any time. In course it don’t make no sort of odds to me whar ye git the dollar, nor how ye git it nuther, so long as ye do git it. Ye ain’t a foolin’ me now?” added Godfrey, looking suspiciously at his son. It was not often that Dan had any money of his own, and his offer to lend so large an amount as a dollar, astonished and perplexed his father, who found it hard work to persuade himself that his ears had not deceived him.

"No, I hain't a foolin' ye," returned Dan. "Ye go on down to the landin' now, an' when I come thar I'll have the dollar in my pocket, an' the shovel hid away somewhar so't I can easy find it again."

"Yer a good boy, Dannie, an' I'm monstrous proud of yer," said Godfrey, once more giving his son's hand a hearty gripe and shake. "An', Dannie, if the time ever comes when——"

Godfrey suddenly paused, while an expression of great astonishment and even of pain settled on his face.

"Dannie," said he, in a tone of voice very unlike that he had just used in addressing his son, "ye hain't been an' found that bar'l with the eighty thousand in it, has yer?"

"No, I hain't," replied Dan.

"Kase if ye have, and ye don't go havers with yer poor ole pop, what's fit the Yanks an' worked so hard to support ye like a gentleman's son had oughter be supported, ye'll be the meanest boy that ever was wrapped up in ragged clothes, an' I'll take the cowhide to ye, big as ye be!"

"Wal, ye needn't go to ravin' that thar way, kase I hain't found the bar'l," said Dan; "if I had,

I should have brung it to ye the fust thing. I didn't know it was thar till ye told me."

"I am powerful glad to hear it, Dannie," said Godfrey, greatly relieved; "ye'd oughter brung it to me if ye'd found it, kase I'm yer pop. I'm the oldest an' know what's best fur us all, an' it's the properest thing that I should have the dealin' out of the money when ye gets it. But ye'll find I won't be no ways stingy. I'll dress ye up like a gentleman, an' ye shall have a circus hoss too, if ye want one."

"Now, pop, don't forget that, will yer?" said Dan, a broad grin overspreading his face, when he thought how delighted he should feel if he could only ride about the country as neatly dressed and as well mounted as Don and Bert Gordon, whom he greatly envied. "An' I wants one of them guns what breaks in two in the middle, an' you shove the powder an' shot in behind, 'stead of drivin' them down with a ramrod. An' I want one of them fishpoles that a feller can take all to pieces an' carry under his arm, an' sum of them shiny boots that ye can allers see yer face in no matter whether ye black 'em or not—sich as Don wears on Sundays."

"Ye shall have 'em all, my son," said Godfrey,

encouragingly, "an' as many more things us ye want. Now here we are at the gen'ral's lane. I'll go on, an' when I see ye agin I shall look fur that dollar sartin. I'll be an awful tuk back, deceived an' upsot man if I don't have a hand in that shootin' match," added Godfrey, hoping by the use of adjectives to convey to Dan's mind some idea of the intense and bitter disappointment he should feel if the expected dollar was not forthcoming.

Dan repeated the promise which he had made so often that he was tired of it, and the two separated, Godfrey keeping on towards the landing, while Dan turned up the lane that led toward General Gordon's house. The boy made his way at once to the barn, and there found a negro hostler, who, after listening to his request, brought out a shovel, which he handed to Dan with many injunctions to be careful of it, and to return it the minute he was done using it. Dan readily promised, and, wondering what the hostler would think if he knew that the implement was to be used to unearth some of the general's buried wealth, leaned the shovel up in one corner where he could find it again when he wanted it. Then placing his rifle beside it, he bent his steps toward the house, and passing around one of the

wings, in which he knew the boys' room was located, discovered Bert Gordon sitting by an open window reading a book.

"Hello, Dan," said the latter, "are you looking for any one?"

"I come over to see Mr. Don," said Dan, touching his hat respectfully and being very careful to put in the mister. Dan was always very polite when he had an object in view.

"He's gone off somewhere—down to the landing, I think," said Bert; "can I do anything for you?"

"I reckon," replied Dan, "Mr. Bert, if ye please, sar, Dave axed me would I come up here an' ax Mr. Don would he give him five of the ten dollars he promised him fur breakin' that pinter pup, now."

"Um!" said Bert, somewhat surprised at the request. "Why didn't David come himself?"

"Wal, ye see, he hated fur to pester ye. Kase you'ns has allers been so good to us, an' we're so dog-gone poor that we hain't got no money to buy a new dress fur mother."

"Oh!" said Bert, throwing down his book and jumping to his feet. "I haven't so much money of my own, but perhaps I can borrow it of mother."

He disappeared as he ceased speaking, while Dan stood chuckling over his good fortune, and hardly able to restrain himself, so delighted was he at the success of his stratagem.

"In course he'll get it of his mother," said Dan, "he'd get her head if he axed fur it. Didn't I tell the ole man that I'd give him that dollar? I reckon we can both go to that shootin' match now. Sarvent, Mr. Bert; much obliged to ye, sar," he added aloud, as the boy came down the steps at that moment and handed him a crisp, new five-dollar bill; "if we an' Dave can ever do ye a good turn, I hope ye'll call on us."

Bert said he would, and went back to his chair and his book, while Dan retraced his steps to the stable, picked up the shovel and his rifle, and went out into the lane. The shovel he hid in a fence corner, taking care to mark the spot so that he could find it again in the dark, if necessity should require it, and then shouldered his rifle and turned toward the landing. The money he carried in his hand, and feasted his eyes on it as he walked along. He could not admire it enough. He had owned but few bills so large as this in his lifetime, and he thought them the most beautiful things he had ever seen.

“I must make it go as fur as I can,” said he, to himself, “an’ I must have the other one, too. How am I goin’ to get it, I wonder? Mother can’t want another new dress right away, in course not; but she can be tuk awful sick with the ager, an’ want some money to buy some store tea, an’ we hain’t got none to give her. Won’t Dave jaw though when he finds it out? Who keers! He spends every cent he gits fur mother, an’ I reckon me an’ pop has a right to some of it. Pop ’ll be awful oneasy to find out whar I got it, but if I tell him he ’ll go back an’ get the other hisself; so I won’t tell him. I must get it broke too at the store afore I see him; kase if he knows I’ve got so much, mebbe he’ll want it all. ’Tain’t best to trust pop too fur.”

Perhaps the reader will now see why Dan was so anxious that his father should not prevent David from promising to break Don Gordon’s pointer. He wanted those ten dollars very badly, had made up his mind to have them; and now that he had half the amount in his pocket, he was supremely happy. He had robbed his brother, and abused Bert’s confidence, but those were matters that did not trouble him in the least. He had the money, and that was all he cared for.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHOOTING MATCH.

THE steamboat landing toward which Godfrey Evans bent his way, was looked upon as a very important place by the settlers in that part of the state. The little collection of houses that had sprung up there contained a post-office, a few dwellings, and the only grocery and drug store to be found within a circle of twenty miles. The mail was brought there twice each week by a mounted carrier, who made regular trips between the landing and the county seat, which lay fifteen miles from the river. No particular packet stopped there, but there was considerable business done by the neighboring planters with the city of Memphis, in the way of plantation supplies and farming implements, and some steamboat called at the landing every week. Its arrival was regarded as an event of great consequence. Whenever five long whistles announced that a steamer was approaching, all the negroes and unemployed whites within hearing of the sound would hasten to the landing to

see her come in, and watch the unloading of the cargo she brought. The sight was not a new or novel one to them, but the life they led there was so monotonous that any event, however trivial, that furnished them fresh topics for an hour's conversation, was gladly welcomed. Godfrey Evans never missed a boat rain or shine. He was there nearly every day, and if he chanced to be absent some of the hangers-on always noticed it, and wondered what could be the matter.

Toward the landing Godfrey hastened after parting from his son, and entering the street which ran from the river back into the country, found himself in front of the grocery, and in the midst of a group of men who were congregated there. They all carried rifles in their hands, and the sharp, whip-like reports which now and then came from a little grove situated a few rods up the river bank, told that the shooting match was in progress.

Godfrey entered the store and drawing up before the counter, rapped on it with his knuckles to attract the attention of the proprietor, who was busy in the little room that opened off the rear. The rap quickly brought him out, but when he saw who his customer was, he stopped and asked :—

“What’s the matter, Godfrey?”

“I’ll take a plug of that amazin’ fine ole Virginy of your’n, if ye please, sir,” said Godfrey, leaning his rifle against the counter and thrusting his hand into his pocket.

The grocery keeper whistled softly to himself, but made no move to produce the required article. He wanted first to see what would be the result of his customer’s investigations. Godfrey continued to search his pockets—every one of them had a hole in it that he could have run his hand through—and his movements grew quicker, as his impatience to find something in them increased, and then slower, as the fact appeared to dawn upon him that there was nothing there.

“You don’t seem to pull out anything, Godfrey,” said the merchant.

“No, it’s a fact, I don’t seem to,” replied the customer. “I’ve left my pocket-book to hum, arter all. Say, Silas,” he added, sinking his voice almost to a whisper, and glancing hastily toward the crowd of men at the door, “ye wouldn’t mind trustin’ me till next week, I reckon, would ye?”

“Yes, I would,” was the blunt reply.

“Only till next week, I say,” repeated Godfrey.

“I’ll have more money then nor a mule can haul away, an’ I’ll pay ye every red cent I owe ye!”

“Well, *then* I’ll sell you everything you want,” said the merchant.

“An’ won’t ye let me have nothin’ now?”

“No, I can’t. And, Godfrey, you’d be better off if you would save your half dollars and buy yourself a pair of shoes. It will not be long, now, before the cold winter rains will set in, and there’ll be frost and snow——”

“I know,” interrupted Godfrey. “But I can kill a heap of deer atween this time and that, an’ deer meat is goin’ to be wuth something han’some this year, kase game is so skase. Come on now, Silas!”

But Silas went off to the other side of the store to attend to the wants of another customer, and Godfrey, finding that no further notice was taken of his presence, picked up his rifle, went out of the door, and turned his face up the road again in the direction from which Dan was expected to appear.

“I’ll never do no more tradin’ with Silas,” said Godfrey to himself. “I’ll send to Memphis fur my things, the way the rest of the gentlemen do; an’ I shall be as fine a gentleman as the best of ’em when

I find that bar'l, won't I? Halloa, Dannie! whar's that dollar? I reckon ye 've got it."

Dan was coming along the road with his head down, and his eyes fastened on the five-dollar bill, which he still held in his hand. Had his father remained silent, he could have walked up close to him before Dan would have known that there was any one near, so fully was his attention taken up with the greenback. Surprised and startled by the abrupt address, he hastily crumpled up the money and thrust it into his pocket.

"What's that yer shovin' out of sight so quick thar?" demanded Godfrey.

"I haint a shovin' nothin' out of sight," answered Dan. "Can't a feller put his gold toothpick into his pocket if he wants to?"

"Whar's the dollar?" inquired his father.

"I hain't got to the landin' yet, have I?" asked Dan, in reply. "I told ye that when I got to the *landin'* I'd have it fur ye."

His father looked at him suspiciously. "Whar are ye goin' to git it down here, an' who's goin' to give it to ye?" he asked.

"Didn't ye tell me that it don't make no sort of odds to ye whar I git it, or who gives it to me, so

long as I git it?" demanded Dan, impatiently. "Now, ye go down to the grove an' stay thar, an' when I come to ye, I'll give ye the dollar."

Godfrey was satisfied with this assurance—at least he appeared to be. He walked along with Dan until they came to the turn in the road, and then he went toward the grove where the shooting was going on, while Dan turned toward the post-office. The latter watched his father until he saw him join one of the little groups of men who were congregated under the trees, and then faced about and entered the store.

There were several customers in there, and Dan was obliged to await his turn. It came at last, and then he handed out his five-dollar bill, with the request that it might be changed into notes of smaller denomination. The grocer rapidly complied, and as Dan gathered up his money and turned to go out, he was astonished to find his father standing at his elbow. Being barefooted, Godfrey had entered the store and placed himself close by his son's side without being observed. His face wore a look of amazement that was curious to behold. He did not know how much money Dan had in his possession, but he judged by the size of the roll he held in his hands, that it must

be a large amount. He marvelled greatly as he followed the boy out of the store.

"Thar's yer dollar, pop," said Dan, who, finding that his secret was discovered, thought it best to put a bold face on the matter. "I told ye I'd be sartin to get it fur ye. Ye mustn't forget to pay it back, or to get me them nice things ye promised when we find that bar'l."

"No, I won't," said Godfrey, smiling joyously as he felt the bill between his fingers. "I'm goin' to be a good pop to ye, Dannie, an' now I'll tell ye what I've been a thinkin' of doin' fur ye: yer gettin' to be an amazin' fine, strappin' big boy, Dannie. Yer a'most as high up in the world as yer pop, an' purty soon ye'll be gettin' to be a young man. Then ye'll want store clothes an' all sorts of nice things, and mebbe me an' yer poor ole mam'll lose yer, kase ye'll be lookin' around fur a wife."

Dan grinned and thought of the little tow-headed girl he had so often been on the point of seeing safe home from church. The reason he didn't do it was because when the critical time came, he could never muster up courage enough to speak to her.

"Yes, ye will," continued his father; "an' then ye'll find that thar hain't nothin' in the world that

takes with the gals, an' the men folks too, like good clothes an' shiny boots an' hats. But it takes money to get them things. Now, I hain't a goin' to be the mean ole hulks to ye that my pop was to me. He left me with empty hands, to make a livin' as best I could, but I'm goin' to be a good pop to ye, an' give ye a fine start. I'm goin' to give ye half that bar'l when I find it."

"How much'll that be?" asked Dan.

"O, it'll be a heap, I tell yer," replied Godfrey, growing animated and hoping thus to work upon Dan's feelings sufficiently to accomplish the object he had in view; "as much as—as—twenty thousand anyhow, an' mebbe sixty," added Godfrey, who was not very quick at figures. "An' then, Dannie, if yer a monstrous good boy, an' allers do jest as I tell ye, mebbe I'll buy out Gen'ral Gordon an' give ye his place. Then ye can have circus hosses, as many as ye want, an' some of them amazin' fine guns what break in two in the middle, an' a sail-boat on the lake, an' all the other nice things sich as Bert and Don has got."

Dan grinned again and fairly trembled with excitement. The prospect of owning all these aids to happiness was enough to excite anybody.

"Now, Dannie, I won't forget all this if ye will promise to be a good boy an' do jest what I tell yer," said his father. "Will ye?"

"I will, pop," replied the boy, shaking hands with his sire, to show that he was in earnest. "Ye jest see if I don't."

"I'm powerful glad to hear ye say so, Dannie," continued Godfrey; and now he came to the point at which he had all the while been aiming, but he broached it with no little hesitation, and anxiety as to the result.

"Now, Dannie," said he, "don't ye think that to pay me fur all these things I'm a goin' to do fur ye, that ye'd oughter give me the rest of the money ye've got in yer pocket?"

"No, I don't," said Dan, promptly.

"What fur?"

"Kase I want it myself. I'm agoin' into the shootin' match too."

"An' shoot agin yer poor old pop, what's fit the Yanks, an' worked so hard fur ye? Dan, I'm astonished at yer! Now, Dannie, I wouldn't go in, if I was ye, kase ye can't win nothin', an' 'sides ye want to save yer money, don't ye? That's the way to get rich, Dannie. Let yer pop do the shootin',

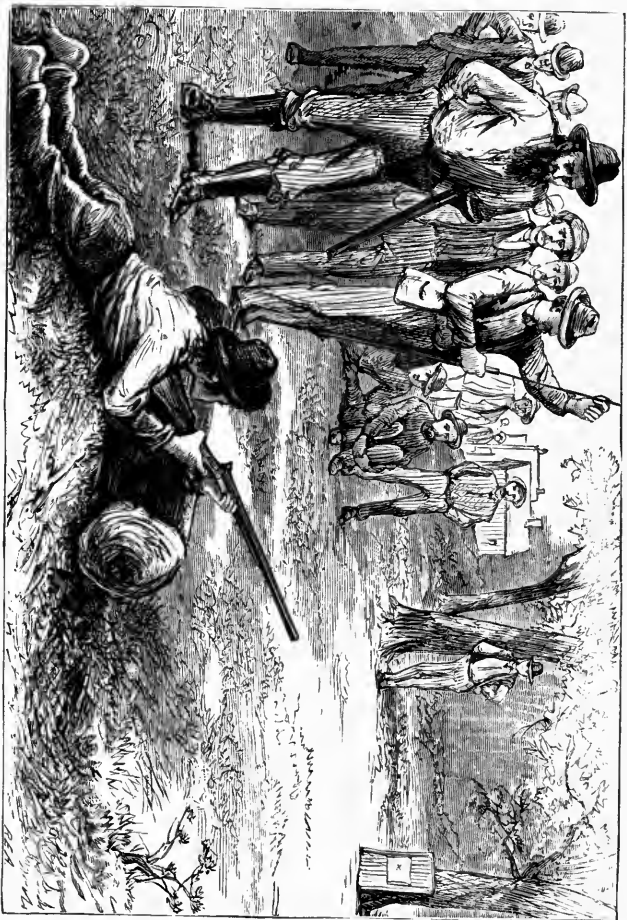
an' we'll have a quarter of beef to carry home to-night, I warrant ye."

But Dan would make no promises, and neither could his father's most earnest entreaties induce him to surrender even the smallest portion of the money he had in his pocket. What he had in his possession he was sure of—the barrel, with its eighty thousand dollars, he was not sure of; and believing that a single bird in the hand was worth a whole flock in the woods, he declared it to be his unalterable determination to hold fast to every cent he had. Godfrey was highly exasperated, but he took good care not to show it. Their near approach to the grove and to the men assembled there, obliged him to cease his entreaties, and with the mental resolve that Dan should be made to repent his refusal, Godfrey went to hunt up the man who had charge of the shooting. To his great delight he learned that there were so many contestants that the entrance fee was only seventy-five cents. This left him a quarter of a dollar to spend, and he made all haste to do it. Forgetting the resolution he had formed a short time before, to spend no more money with Silas Jones, he hurried off to the store, and returned with a plug of the tobacco for which the merchant had refused to

credit him. When he came back, he saw Dan stretched out on the ground behind a small log squinting along the barrel of his rifle, which was pointed at a piece of white paper fastened to a board, and placed against a tree a few yards away.

“The ongrateful scamp!” said his father, to himself. “He’s gone an’ spent six bits to go into the shootin’ match arter all. He ain’t fit to have money, he throws it about so scandalous. I’ll take keer that he don’t throw away no more.”

For the benefit of our city readers, who may like to know something of the sports and pastimes of those whose means of recreation are not so abundant as their own, we will tell how a shooting match is conducted in the South and West. In the first place, we are glad to say that it is very different from turkey shooting as carried on in the Northern States. In the latter there is no sport whatever. The luckless turkey is tied to a stump, so that it has no chance for life, and the marksmen station themselves at distances varying from one to two hundred and fifty yards, and shoot at it, until some one kills or wounds it. It is a cruel practice, and no boy or man either who has the least spark of humanity or love of fair play in him, will engage in it.



THE SHOOTING-MATCH.

In the shooting matches of which we speak, the contestants do not shoot at the game, but at a mark. Each one provides himself with a piece of board, which is held over a fire until one side of it is thoroughly blackened. Upon this blackened surface a cross, like the sign $+$, is made with the point of a knife. The place where these two lines intersect is called the centre; and as it is no larger than the point of a pin, you can easily imagine how much skill is required to make a "dead-centre" shot. On this centre, to show where it is, is placed a piece of white paper—it may be half an inch or three or six inches square, as the shooter prefers—which is held in its place by a tack or wooden pin. The contestants then station themselves forty or sixty yards away, according as they want to shoot off-hand or with a rest, and the sport begins. The one who makes the best shot takes the first choice of the prizes, whatever they may be; the one who makes the second best, takes the second choice; and so on until all the prizes are gone.

These prizes may be turkeys, chickens or pigs; but beef is shot for more than anything else. Whatever the article is, it is furnished by some one of the contestants who sets a price upon it, and collects of

each one who participates in the shooting an equal part of the amount. Thus, if a beef worth twenty dollars is shot for and there are twenty contestants, each one pays the owner a dollar. In this case there are six prizes—the two hind-quarters, the two fore-quarters, the hide and tallow, and the lead that is shot into the tree against which the boards are placed. The last prize is of no small value sometimes, especially to men who live four or five miles from a store. If there are twenty contestants and each one shoots a dozen times, the chunk of lead which will be cut out of the tree by the one who wins it, will furnish bullets enough to last him a year. As soon as the shooting is over the beef is killed, and each one takes whatever he may have been skilful enough to win.

This was the kind of a match that Dan and his father attended; and the result of it was not a little surprising to the latter. If it had not been for Dan's good shooting, the two would have been obliged to return home empty-handed. Godfrey's great skill with the rifle, of which he so often boasted, was not made apparent on this particular day. He got nothing, but Dan won a prize. He made four centres, but three of them had to be placed against the same

number of centres made by other marksmen. When that had been done the boy had still one centre left, and that entitled him to the first choice. Dan was highly elated, and his father was correspondingly enraged.

“The ungrateful rascal,” said Godfrey to himself, “to come here an’ shoot agin’ his poor ole pop what’s done so much fur him, an’ make me take a back seat! I eddicated that boy myself. I larnt him how to handle a rifle, and now I wish I hadn’t done it, kase this is the kind of pay I get fur it. I’ll take mighty good keer that he don’t get no more seventy-five cents to spend at shootin’ matches. It beats all natur’ whar he got that wad of money, an’ if I had another dollar I’d give it to know !”

But Godfrey said nothing. He knew that if he spoke as he felt, it would put Dan on his guard, and that might lead to the derangement of certain plans he had formed. So he laughed at the witty things that were said to him about being beaten by his own son, and when some one complimented Dan on the skill he had exhibited, his father said it might have been expected, for the boy was simply a chip of the old block.

“I’m monstrous proud of ye, Dannie,” said God-

frey, as the two wended their way toward home after the shooting was over; "monstrous proud. It done me good to see them ole fellers look wild when ye made them centres so handy, one arter t'other. I'm a trifle sorry that ye spent yer money so scandalous foolish, but it can't be helped now. 'Tain't the way to get rich, Dannie, that ar way aint, an' I hope ye won't do it no more."

This was the way Godfrey talked; but had he acted out his feelings, he would have fallen upon Dan with the cowhide the moment they reached the cabin.

The three miles that lay between the landing and the Evans plantation being accomplished, Godfrey, with the air of a man who had done a day's work with which he was perfectly satisfied, seated himself on a bench beside the door, preparatory to indulging in a pipeful of the store tobacco which had come into his possession so unexpectedly; while Dan proceeded to the corn-crib behind the house, and harnessed an old and very infirm mule to a rickety wagon, intending to return to the landing and bring home the quarter of beef that had fallen to his lot. He went about his task in that peculiar and indescribable way a boy has of doing things when he has something in view

besides the work in hand. His movements were stealthy, and he cast frequent and furtive glances around him, as if he were afraid of being caught in some act that would bring him certain and speedy punishment.

Once or twice he moved quickly to the cabin and looked around the corner, to make sure that his father was still seated where he had left him. He always found him there. He never seemed to have changed his position. He sat with his legs stretched out before him, his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his head bowed, his eyes closed and his beloved pipe tightly clenched between his teeth. He was asleep; and Dan, having made sure of this, quickly returned to the corn-crib and halted under a shed which was built on one side of it. This shed was used to shelter the wagon, the few farming implements Godfrey possessed, and also the harness, which, when not in use, was kept hung up on a wooden pin driven into one of the logs of which the corn-crib was built. Dan came to a stop under this pin, and after looking all around again to make sure that there was no one watching him, he seized it with both hands, and after working it backward and forward a few times, finally pulled it out.

Looking into the hole, as if to satisfy himself that something he had previously placed there was safe, Dan drew a roll of bills out of his pocket, and, after running his eye over them to make sure that they were all there, thrust them into the hole, and with one quick blow with his hand drove the pin back to its place. This done, he jumped into the wagon, picked up the knotted lines, and as he drove around the corner of the cabin, took care to notice his father's position. Godfrey was still asleep—there could be no doubt about that. His pipe was twisted about in his mouth, until the bowl pointed downward, his head was thrown over on one side, and as Dan looked at him, he told himself that he was disposed of for two long hours, at least. Yet so suspicious was he, that he did not neglect to turn and look at him every now and then as long as he remained in sight of the cabin.

“He’s thar yet, an’ I reckon I’ve fixed things all right,” thought Dan, with a chuckle denoting intense satisfaction. “He’s been kinder snoopin’ around ever since he found out I had that money, an’ I was afear’d that mebbe he’d smell out somethin’. He thinks I don’t know it, but I’ve seed him more’n once sarchin’ my pockets arter I went to bed, an’

he thought I was asleep. He was a lookin' fur gun caps, an' things he couldn't buy hisself. I reckon he hain't made much outen me since I found that hidin' place fur my money an' sich plunder. 'Tain't safe to trust pop no further nør a feller can see him."

With these sage reflections, Dan drove on toward the landing.

CHAPTER V.

GODFREY FINDS SOMETHING.

WHEN Dan drove around the corner of the cabin, the slumbering Godfrey, without changing his position, opened one of his eyes, but quickly closed it again as Dan turned about in his wagon to look at him. Presently he opened it again, and kept it open until Dan once more turned to look at him; and the farther the wagon left the house behind, the oftener the eye was opened, and the longer it remained open. When the wagon and its driver had disappeared around a bend in the road, Godfrey opened both eyes, straightened up, stretching his arms and yawning as if he had just awakened out of a sound sleep, turned his pipe about in his mouth, and with an expression of great satisfaction on his face, arose and went around the corner of the house toward the corn-crib. He walked straight to the shed that stood beside it, and placing his hand on the same pin

that Dan had removed but a few minutes before, pulled it out and looked into the opening.

He was surprised at the size of it. By the aid of a gouge, or some other sharp instrument, the inside of the hole had been cut away until a cavity had been formed that would hold a quart or more; and in this were two or three small packages, done up in brown paper. Godfrey opened his knife and poked them out one by one. The first contained the greenbacks of which he was in search. - He counted them over carefully, and was greatly disappointed and surprised to find that the whole amount was only three dollars and twenty-five cents. But even that sum was more than he could often call his own, and his fingers closed tightly about it as if he feared that it might somehow slip away from him and be lost. The other packages contained powder, lead and a box of caps. These were all useful to Godfrey, who put them into the pocket that had the smallest holes in it, and after replacing the pin and driving it into the hole with a blow of his hand, walked away, well satisfied with the discovery he had made.

Dan was not so smart as he thought he was. His father had known for a long time that he had a secret hiding place for all the various little odds and ends

that came into his hands, and when Dan went to harness the mule, the suspicious glances he cast about and his stealthy actions, made Godfrey believe that he had only to watch him to find out where that hiding place was. There was a convenient opening in the rear wall of the cabin, that had been formed by the "chinking" falling out, and through this hole Godfrey watched all Dan's movements. As long as Dan remained at the corn-crib, Godfrey kept his eye at the opening; but when the boy came toward the cabin, he left it, and passing quickly across the floor and out at the door, seated himself on the bench and took up the position he had occupied when Dan last saw him. When his son, satisfied with his reconnaissance, went back to the corn-crib, Godfrey again entered the cabin and stationing himself at the hole in the rear wall, saw everything that was done. He was highly delighted with the success of his little stratagem. The money was in his possession now, and besides he had secured ammunition enough to last him a month.

"The amazin' ongrateful an' ondutiful chap, to hide things from his poor ole dad in sich a scandalous way as that ar," said Godfrey, giving his pocket a slap. "He wouldn't lend it to me to take keer of it fur

him, an' now I've got it anyhow. But how came he by it, is what I'd like to know. Don't stand to reason that Silas Jones give it to him, kase he hain't been a doin' no work for Silas—no, I'll warrant he hain't. Dan takes arter his pop, and is too much of a gentleman to do anything like work when he can get outen it."

How Dan came by the money in the first place was a matter that interested and perplexed Godfrey not a little. He seated himself on the bench again, and smoked up two or three pipes of store tobacco while he was thinking about it. But he could come to no conclusion, although he kept his mind busy until the creaking of the wagon wheels announced that Dan was coming back. Then Godfrey had other matters to think of. He expected a stormy scene with his son when the latter discovered that his money had been removed from its hiding place, and he prepared for it by going into the cabin and placing the rawhide where he could find it at a moment's warning. Then he pushed back his sleeves, seated his remnant of a hat firmly on his head, and seated himself on the bench again to await Dan's approach.

"Yer mam hain't come hum yet, Dannie," said he, when the boy had arrived within speaking dis-

tance. "She's allers away when she'd oughter be here tidyin' up things, an' makin' the house look as though white folks lived here; but we won't wait fur her. Ye can cook as well as any woman, Dannie, an' we'll have some of that fresh meat to onct."

Dan made no reply in words. He put his hand into his pocket and looked at his father; whereupon the latter arose and glanced into the wagon. It was empty.

"Whar's the meat?" he demanded, angrily.

"It's done sold," was the reply.

For a moment Godfrey acted as if he were about to go off into an awful passion. He spread out his feet, clenched both his hands and began shaking them in the air. Then he jumped up, knocked his heels together, and having thus loosened his joints, was ready for action. Dan saw that the storm was coming, and made all haste to put himself out of the way of its fury, first by jumping out of the wagon on the opposite side, so that he would have a fair chance to run if he found it necessary, and second by trying to appease his father.

"Hain't that the way to get rich, pop,—by takin' money every chance ye get?" said he. "I got it an' I saved it, too. Look a yer," he added, pulling

some bills out of his pocket, and extending them across the wagon toward his father.

Godfrey was mollified at once. The sight of money always made him good-natured, especially if he saw a prospect of handling it himself.

“How much ye got thar?” he asked, in a very different tone of voice.

“Three dollars an’ a half,” replied Dan. “Silas Jones done offered it to me fur my beef, an’ when I axed him whar was the money, he counted it right down. Mebbe I could lend ye another dollar, pop, if ye’ll promise to pay it back.”

Godfrey had in some way collected his wandering wits by this time. He reviewed the situation hastily while Dan was speaking, and greatly to the surprise of the boy, who had never known him to refuse money before, replied :

“No, Dannie, the money is yourn, an’ I wont take it from ye. I’ll have plenty of my own in a week or two—jest as soon as we find that thar bar’l. But, Dannie, I had got my mind all made up fur somethin’ nice, an’ I can’t no ways do without some fresh meat of some kind fur supper ; so if ye’ll take yer rifle an’ go right out an’ shoot some squirrels, I’ll say no

more about yer sellin' the meat. I'll unhitch the critter, too."

Dan, glad to be let off so easily, and wondering greatly at this unusual display of forbearance on the part of his father, readily agreed to this proposal. But he didn't quite like the look of things. He had a suspicion that this was simply a ruse on the part of his father, and that when he came out from behind the wagon and entered the cabin to get his rifle, Godfrey would seize him and bring the rawhide into play. Experience had taught him that his father's word was not always to be depended on, so he was very cautious in his movements. He accompanied the wagon to the corn-crib, waited until his father began to unharness the mule, and then darted into the cabin, secured his rifle and ammunition, and quickly put a ten rail fence between him and his sire. Then he began to breathe easier.

Being left to himself, Godfrey proceeded very leisurely to unharness the mule and detach him from the wagon. Just as the work was about to be completed, he heard the report of his son's rifle away off in the woods. The sound had a strange effect upon him. His actions seemed to say that he had been waiting for it. Quickly dropping the harness, which he was

on the point of hanging in its accustomed place, he seized the wooden pin that concealed the entrance to Dan's hiding-place, and pulled it out. Then he took the packages from his pocket, one by one, and put them back in the opening just as he had found them—the powder first, the lead next, then the caps, and lastly the money; and when they were all in, he drove the pin back to its place and hung the harness upon it. He seemed to feel relieved after it was done. He drew a long breath, and started for the cabin to solace himself with a pipe, as he always did after he had exerted himself in any unusual degree.

In half an hour the sun began to sink behind the trees on the opposite bank of the river, and then Godfrey's scattered family began to come in, one after the other. First came his wife, who had been over to see a neighbor with whom she had been on visiting terms in better days. On her arm she carried a basket covered with a snow-white napkin. Godfrey's eyes glistened at the sight of it. He had seen a good many such baskets carried into his house of late, and he knew that every time they came he and the rest of the family had something good to eat for a day or two.

“Now, Godfrey, if you will chop some wood and

start a fire, I'll get some supper," said his wife, cheerfully.

The man took his pipe out of his mouth and groaned. Chopping wood was his pet aversion.

"Didn't used to be so in the good ole days, did it, Susie?" said he, with a long-drawn sigh. "I used to have plenty of niggers to do that ar mean work. Choppin' wood ain't gentleman's work, Susie—no it ain't!"

"But somebody must do it, Godfrey," said Mrs. Evans.

"So they must; but I can't seem to stoop to it, somehow. Here comes Dave. Make him do it."

"David is tired out, most likely. He's been tramping through the fields all the afternoon."

"An' hain't I tired out too, I'd like to know?" exclaimed Godfrey. "Here I've been an' hoofed it down to the landin' an' worked like a good fellow at that shootin' match. Whew! It jest makes me ache all over to think of all I've been an' done since dinner. 'Sides, Dave's got no sort o' right to go a trampin' 'round the fields all the arternoon. He'd oughter be to hum straightenin' up things. But it won't be so long—not longer nor next week, nohow—kase that thar bar'l will——"

“Now, Godfrey!” interrupted Mrs. Evans.

“Now, ole woman!” retorted Godfrey.

“I knew you didn’t mean what you said to-day at the dinner table,” said his wife, “and I wish you wouldn’t talk so before the boys.”

“About that thar bar’l, with the eighty thousand dollars into it? I did mean it, an’ I tell ye I will talk so, too!”

“Then it is high time somebody was taking charge of your children. David may be able to resist such temptations, but I don’t want to have him put to the test. You will certainly have a bad influence over Dan, for you will make him dishonest.”

The mere mention of that word seemed to irritate Godfrey. He jumped up from the bench, spread out his feet, and taking his pipe from his mouth with one hand, extended the other toward his wife.

“Now, ole woman, jest look at ye!” he began; and then he bounded into the air, knocked his heels together, and came down on his feet again with a jar that must have shaken him all over. “An’ now jest look at me!”

“I was talking with Mrs. Gordon about it not more than an hour ago,” said Mrs. Evans, not at all alarmed by her husband’s words or actions. “She

says the general wants to do something for David, and will use his influence to put him where he can make a man of himself. He has aspirations, and I believe will be of some use in the world if he ever has the chance."

Godfrey put his pipe back into his mouth and sat down again.

"What did you say them things is that Dave's got?" he asked.

"Aspirations," replied Mrs. Evans.

"What's them, an' whar did he get 'em?" inquired Godfrey, who thought they might be something of value which David carried in his pockets, and which might be stolen after the boy had gone to bed.

"I mean that he doesn't want to live in this way all his life. He wants to do and be something better."

"Oh!" said Godfrey, somewhat disappointed. "Wal, I can take keer of him, an' without no help from the gen'ral, who can jest watch his own boys an' let mine be. That bar'l will fix things all right!"

Mrs. Evans, seeing that nothing was to be gained by talking to her husband, passed on into the cabin; and just then David came up. He carried his old single-barrel shot gun over his shoulder, a bunch of

quails in his hand, and Don Gordon's pointer followed close at his heels, his appearance indicating that he had been doing some work since he left the cabin.

"Wal, sonny," said Godfrey, "how does the pup understand his business?"

"O, it will be no trouble at all to break him," answered David. "He understands some things as well as an old dog already."

"I'm glad to hear ye say so, an' I'm glad to see ye've done so well," said Godfrey, glancing at the bunch of quails. "Ye're getting to be a right smart hunter. Ye can make a good livin' at it some day, if ye want to."

"But I don't want to," said David quickly. "I can make a better living at something else, and take care of my mother, too."

"That's right, sonny. Allers think of yer mam, what's done so much fur ye; an' of yer pop, too. He's worked monstrous hard to edicate ye an' keep a roof over yer head, yer pop has, an' ye'd oughter to begin to pay him back purty soon. Now, put away yer gun an' go an' chop some wood fur yer mam to cook supper by. She's tired, an' so be I. We've worked powerful hard this arternoon, we

have, while ye've been trampin' about enjoyin' yerself."

Godfrey settled back on the bench and gave his undivided attention to his pipe for a few seconds and then suddenly arose and entered the cabin. He had counted the moments of Dan's absence pretty closely and knew about what time to look for his return. He knew, too, what the boy would do first when he came back, and wanted to be where he could watch all his movements. He applied his eye to the hole in the wall where the thinking had fallen out, and was just in time to see Dan climb the fence that separated the woods from the little clearing in which the cabin stood, and make his way towards the corner-crib. When he reached it he paused long enough to make sure that there was no one in sight, and then quickly took the harness down from its place, and pulled out the pin. A hasty glance at the interior of his hiding place, satisfied him that everything was just as he had left it; and this being settled he pulled something out of his pocket, pushed it into the opening, replaced the pin, and hung up the harness, just as David, with an axe on his shoulder, came whistling around the corner of the cabin.

Having seen all he wanted to see, Godfrey quickly

crossed the cabin and seating himself on the bench pulled vigorously at his pipe.

“Fur downright Yankee ‘cuteness an’ smartness I jist think I lay over ‘most anybody,” thought he, giving his knee an approving slap. “I’m jist three dollars an’ a half ahead of what I would have been, if I had kept that money when I had it. When Dan told me that he’d done sold that beef, I knowed what he’d do with the money, an’ that’s why I sent him into the woods arter them squirrels. It give me time to fix things in that hole jist as I found ‘em, an’ now Dan’s done gone an’ put that three an’ a half in there too, which makes me a’most seven dollars ahead of the hounds, if I counted it up on my fingers right, an’ I reckon I did. I hain’t agoin’ to hunt fur that bar’l to-night, kase when Dan goes to sleep I want to slip out thar an’ get that money, afore he has a chance to take it out an’ put it sowewhar else!”

At this moment Dan came around the corner of the cabin, with a string of squirrels thrown over his shoulder. There were eight of them altogether and he held them up so that his father could see that every one of them was shot through the head. Godfrey complimented him on his skill, and when the boy passed into the cabin became suddenly silent and

thoughtful. A question had just occurred to him. What if Dan had spent some of the money at the landing before he came home? He could not breathe freely until he found out.

"Dannie," said he, as the boy, having put away his rifle, came out again and seated himself on a log near the cabin preparatory to skinning the squirrels he had shot, "ye told me ye'd got—how much fur that quarter of beef?"

"Three an' a half, pop," was the reply, and Dan began to look wild, and arose rather hastily from the log. There was something in the tone in which this question was propounded that made him fear that the storm he had quelled a short time before, was gathering again; but his father's next words reassured him.

"Yer a good son, Dannie," said Godfrey. "An' that's the way to get rich, that ar way is. Take money when ye can get it, an' *keep* it, too; mind that, Dannie. Don't go to throwin' it about loose an' reckless, but hold fast to it with sich a grip that nothin' can't make ye let up. Ye didn't spend none of it at the landin', I hope?"

"No, I didn't. Didn't I tell ye that I brung every cent of it hum?"

“That’s a good boy,” said Godfrey; and having set his fears at rest, he became silent again and puffed at his pipe until he was called to supper. When the meal was over, he went back to his pipe again; Dan made a pretence of chopping wood; while David assisted his mother in her household duties. It began to grow dark at last, and then Dan threw down his axe and seated himself beside his father who was nodding on the bench.

“Say, pop, be we goin’ to look fur that bar’l to-night?” he asked.

“No, Dannie, we hain’t,” was the sleepy reply. “I can’t. Here I’ve been an’ hoofed it down to the landin’ an’ back since dinner, an’ I’m jest teetotally tuckered out. Wait till to-morrow an’ then we’ll go!”

Dan was surprised at this answer. He was tired himself, but the prospect of digging up eighty thousand dollars in gold and silver, would have put life and energy into him if he had been completely exhausted. He attributed his father’s refusal to his inherent laziness; but something he discovered the next morning showed him that he was wrong there.

The evening was passed in much the same manner that every evening was passed under Godfrey’s roof.

There were no candles to light the hovel, and even if there had been there were no books or papers to read, no games or anything else to engage in to make the time pass pleasantly. In one corner of the cabin beside the fire-place was a pile of resinous knots which David had picked up in the woods. One of these was occasionally placed on the coals, and while it blazed up and threw a feeble light about the room, David and his mother talked of the past and speculated concerning the future. This was the way David's education had always been conducted. The remembrance of these evening interviews with his mother went through life with him, and the moral lessons that were then inculcated stood him in good hand in after years.

Dan and his father had their own peculiar ways of putting in the time that elapsed between the cleaning away of the supper dishes and the hour for retiring. Dan always stretched himself out on the floor and went to sleep, while his father nodded on the bench outside the door. On this particular evening Godfrey did not seem to slumber very heavily for every now and then he would straighten up and look steadily toward the corner in which Dan lay. He appeared to be waiting for something. It came

at last in the shape of a gentle snore, and then Godfrey arose and stole away in the darkness. A few minutes later he came back, and taking possession of the miserable "shake down " he called a bed, was soon sound asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR FRIENDS, THE GORDONS.

READER, are you tired of Godfrey Evans and his dismal surroundings? If you are, let us go up to General Gordon's, where we shall be sure of a hearty welcome and more agreeable companionship.

The house in which the general and his family now live does not look much like the noble mansion they called home a few years ago; but it is very neat and comfortable, and there is always room enough under its hospitable roof to accommodate visitors, who are greeted and entertained in good old southern style. It stands on the spot where the old house stood, and in the midst of extensive grounds, which a few years ago looked like a tropical garden. They still retain some of their old-time beauty, but yet wear an air of neglect; and many of the rare and valuable plants, which Mrs. Gordon and her daughters took so much pride in cultivating and protecting from the fury of the winter rains and sleets, have perished for want of care, and have not been

replaced. On one side the grounds slope down to the shores of Diamond lake—a little sheet of water about four miles long and half a mile wide, surrounded on three sides by a dense forest of tall trees, so heavily draped with climbing plants, mosses and grape-vines, that to a person seated in a boat in the middle of the lake, it would seem to be almost impenetrable.

This lake is not like our northern lakes. The gravelly beach is wanting, and so are the black bass, the pickerel and other fine game fish that we find in our waters. The shores are low and muddy, the banks are thickly lined with snags, stumps and trees, and a northern boy would look twice at the dark, slimy water before he would think of going in bathing there. If he made up his mind to venture, he might think better of it if, while he was looking around for a log to put his clothes on, he should discover a large moccasin curled up in the edge of the water, and closely watching all his movements. Are these snakes poisonous? Ask Don and Bert what they think about it. They will tell you that one day last August, while they were sitting on the little wooden wharf, which juts out into the lake below the summer house, bobbing for sun-fish, they happened to look into the water a little way from the shore, and saw

what appeared to be the head and neck of a goose moving rapidly along. But they knew it was not that, for summer is not the time for waterfowl down here, and besides a goose does not swim with his body submerged. It was a moccasin, and he was directing his course toward a log which lay in the water about twenty yards from the wharf. The boys knew he was a big one, or he could not have held his head so high above the water ; but they were amazed at the sight of the bulk he presented to view when, reaching the log, he drew himself upon it, and stretched out flat preparatory to taking his afternoon nap. The longer the boys looked at him, the more their astonishment increased ; and at last Don quietly laid down his fish-pole, and requesting his brother to keep an eye on the reptile, arose and stole off to the house. When he returned he carried a light breech-loading shot gun in his hands—one of those weapons that “break in two in the middle.” Both barrels were loaded, and Don had two more cartridges in his pocket for use in case the first should not prove effectual.

The moccasin lay in such a position that Don could not see his head ; so he took a hasty aim at the thickest part of his body, and fired both barrels in

quick succession. He was so surprised at the effect of his shot that he did not think of the cartridges he had in his pocket. The moccasin was not killed, but he was so badly wounded that he could not get off the log.

“The end his head was on was lively enough,” Don afterward told his father, “and whirled around at a great rate; but the end his tail was on seemed to be completely paralyzed, for it did not move at all.” He made the most desperate efforts to crawl off into the water, and failing in that, turned and bit himself twice, and a moment afterward was dead.

Don leaned on his breech-loader and looked at his brother. “That settles two things, Bert,” said he. “One is that we have all been mistaken in supposing that moccasins are not poisonous; and the second is, that one must not put implicit faith in everything he sees in books. Only yesterday I was reading in my natural history that a scorpion, ‘if surrounded by a circle of fire so that it cannot escape, will turn and sting itself through the head, this being the only companion of man in suicide.’ This little incident proves that man has other companions in suicide, doesn’t it?”

Besides these disagreeable and dangerous inhab-

itants of the lake, there are others in the shape of alligator-gars and turtles. The latter have bills like parrots, and grow so large and heavy that it takes two men to lift one of them. A gar is a long, slender fish, and but for its color, might be taken for a gigantic pickerel. It is sometimes found eight feet in length. People say they are harmless, but a timid person would not care to trust one too far after looking at its mouthful of teeth.

The boys have two canoes and one sail-boat in the lake. The boat was built in St. Louis, and a steamer brought it to the landing, where Don and Bert took charge of it and navigated it to the wharf by way of the Pass, which connects the lake with the river. This Pass was for a long time blocked up by a levee to keep the waters of the river from overflowing the low lands about the lake. During the war it was cut by the Union forces, and the gunboats came down through the lake and entered Coldwater and Tallahatchee rivers, in the effort to get behind the strong fortifications at Haines's Bluff.

Although the lake is but a poor fishing ground, it is a splendid place for ducks and geese. About a mile from the house, on the river side of the lake, is a long, narrow point, which stretches almost across to

the opposite bank, and it is there that the best shooting is to be found. As it belongs to their father the boys have taken possession of it, and on the highest and driest part, erected a rough board cabin which goes by the name of "Our Shooting-box." It looks dreary enough in summer, with only a rusty stove and a few empty cupboards in it by way of furniture; but when the "melancholy days" are come, and the leaves begin to fall, and the autumnal winds to whistle dismally through the branches of the forest—when the trumpet-like notes of the first returning flock of brant are heard, then the shooting-box opens wide its hospitable door, and receives beneath the shelter of its roof a company of merry youngsters, who yearly congregate here to enjoy the splendid shooting the lake affords. Then the bare floor is covered with comfortable rugs, and there are camp chairs and lounges enough to accommodate all the young sportsmen who can crawl into the cabin. Then the cupboards are abundantly supplied with dishes, knives, forks and other table furniture, and everything in the way of provisions that hungry boys can ask for; and in the loft, which extends over half the room, are always to be found a barrel or two of hickory nuts, butternuts and pecans. And what

sport the boys enjoy here in these days! A person who has once taken part in it, will willingly go a hundred miles to have more of it. The shooting is all done over decoys. These decoys are pieces of light wood shaped like ducks and geese, and painted to resemble them. And that they do resemble the natural bird very closely, is proved by the fact that more than one hunter has emptied his double-barrel into a flock of decoys and never discovered his mistake, until the disgusted owner of the wooden birds jumped up from behind his blind and demanded to know what he was about.

These decoys are anchored off the point of which we have spoken, and Don and Bert, and the rest of the young hunters, hide behind their blinds—little breastworks of bushes erected on shore—and with their guns in their hands, hold themselves in readiness to shoot at the first flock that comes within range. And they are never obliged to wait long. The wild fowl, in passing from one end of the lake to the other, discover what they suppose to be a company of their friends swimming in perfect security near the shore, and stop to pay them a visit; but just as they swing to the decoys, their ranks are decimated by the double-barrels, and it is a lucky

flock that gets off without leaving a dozen or more of its number behind. The birds being gone, Don's pointers, which are crouching behind the blind by their master's side, retrieve the dead and wounded in the most approved style; and when they are all brought in the boys are ready for another flock. When night comes they are sure to be very tired and hungry, and to have as many birds as they care to carry home. They are equally certain to find a smoking supper waiting for them on their arrival at the shooting-box, and old Cuff ready to receive them with open arms.

During the evening they fight their battles over again—telling of that fine shot made at such a distance that a miss seemed certain, or that clear miss made when the bird ought to have been easily brought to bag—and at last go to bed to pass through the same exciting scenes again in their dreams. We do not blame Don and his friends for thinking a good deal of that little shooting-box, for we passed one of the pleasantest months of our life there.

Having seen the grounds and glanced at all the interesting things outside the house, let us go in for a few minutes. The wide front door stands invitingly

open—there is no danger to be apprehended from tramps and sneak-thieves in this out-of-the-way place—and being well acquainted with all the inmates, and feeling quite at home here, we enter without ceremony. Passing along the hall and turning to the left we find a second door, also standing open, and this leads us into the apartment occupied by Don and his brother as a sitting and school room. They study and recite their lessons here, and when their school duties are over, they have the room to themselves. It is neatly furnished, and in it are many of those things which Dan Evans seems to regard as indispensable aids to happiness. Of course he does not include books and papers in the list, but we think they are very necessary, and so do Don and Bert. Their library is small but well chosen, and made up almost entirely of books from which they can learn something.

We enter the room on the afternoon of the same day on which Dan Evans came over to ask for five of the ten dollars that Don had promised David for field-breaking his young pointer. We have seen that he got the money, and that he went away leaving Bert reading a book. We find him engaged in the same pleasing occupation. He reads for a few min-

utes, and then placing the book on his knee, gazes thoughtfully out at the trees in the yard.

“I don’t see why it can’t be done,” he says, to himself. “Father has a light spring wagon that I know he would let us take, and we have two good ponies to draw it. We couldn’t put up at a hotel while we are gone, but who cares for that? We own a good tent, and if we should take old Cuff along to act as cook and camp-keeper, we could live as well as we do at home or at the shooting-box.”

The book Bert has been reading, and which suggests this train of thought, is Frank Forester’s “Deer Stalkers.” It tells how Harry Archer and two companions went on a deer hunt somewhere in the state of New York, and how they enjoyed themselves. It is one of Don’s favorite books; and the reason Bert reads it to-day is because it happened to be the first one he picked up when he came into the room. While he read the thought occurred to him that if he and his brother should follow in the lead of the heroes of the book, they could spend a few days very pleasantly. They had everything needful for a week’s sojourn in the woods, or a month’s, and a trip like that would just suit Don. Their school term would be over in a week—their tutor was going north

to spend the holidays with his friends—and Don, who had grown very fond of him and of his books, wondered how he was going to pass the time during his absence. Of course there was the shooting-box, but one does not care to spend two whole months in duck hunting, and Don had often been heard to declare that he wished he could go somewhere and spend a week as he had never spent one before. Bert thought he had hit upon something that would please him. He had heard wonderful reports of late of the abundance of game to be found in an adjoining county, forty miles away. Deer were so plenty that they had been seen in the corn-fields; a bear had been known to approach a lonely farm house in broad daylight and walk off with a pig; and one day a hunter, who was roaming the woods with his pack of hounds, encountered some animal in a dense cane-brake which almost annihilated his dogs, and made off before the hunter could shoot him. The man did not know what sort of an animal it was, for the cane was so thick that he could not see him; but there was only one thing in that part of the country that could whip out a pack of hounds so easily and completely, and that was a panther. Bert did not like the idea of encountering such game as this, but Don

would not have hesitated a minute. Besides being famous as a wing shot, and being very fond of the breech-loader which created such havoc among the ducks, snipe and quails, he took care to have it known that he had bagged nobler game; and when he exhibited the old-fashioned muzzle loading rifle which his father had given him, and with which he had brought down his first deer, he never forgot to mention that four very fine bucks and one two year old bear had fallen to that same gun.

“Don would make a capital Harry Archer,” said Bert, continuing the soliloquy we have interrupted, “he is so fearless and enthusiastic. Old Cuff would make a very good Jim Matlock—he’s black, but still he’ll do—and instead of Smoke, the Scotch greyhound that could perform such wonders in the way of running and pulling down deer, we shall have, if we have a mind to take them with us, six of the best hounds that ever came from Kentucky. There’ll be nothing wanting, unless it be a Harry Barhyte or a Ned Wheeler to get us into some sort of a scrape. If they should turn up, it would make it all the more interesting for Don. The thought of meeting one of the panthers, which they say are plenty in the canebrakes, is not a very pleasant one, and almost makes

me say that I will stay at home; but, now that I come to think of it, we need not camp out an hour unless we please. Bob Harrington lives over there, in the very midst of the wilderness, and we'd be welcome at his house as long as we chose to stop with him. Halloo!" he added aloud, as a step was heard in the hall, and his brother came rapidly into the room. "I was just thinking about you."

"You're always thinking of somebody besides yourself," replied Don, drawing a chair to his brother's side and flourishing a letter which he held in his hand. "Your face tells me that you have something pleasant on your mind: what is it? Let us have all the sunshine we can, for the clouds are coming—one cloud at least."

"What's the matter?" asked Bert, who thought by the scowl on his brother's face that the clouds had come already, "and whom is that letter from?"

"Let us have the good news first," replied Don, putting the letter behind his chair, as his brother reached out his hand to take it. "This will keep."

"So will the other; but since you are so determined, I suppose I shall have to tell you. When our tutor goes away next week we shall have two whole months to ourselves, and instead of spending

all the time at the shooting-box, I propose that some fine morning we put the ponies to the spring wagon, take our tent, one of our canoes and everything else we need for camping out, and spend a week or so on Coldwater."

"Among the deer and bears!" exclaimed Don. "That would be just the idea if we could only carry it out."

"And why can't we carry it out?"

"Because we are not going to have those two months all to ourselves; and besides, one of the two fellows who is about to intrude his most unwelcome presence upon us, is not such a boy as we should like to have in our camp."

"What do you mean?" asked Bert.

"I can best answer that question by reading a portion of this letter," replied Don. "It came more than a week ago. Father and mother have consulted about it, and have finally consented, most reluctantly, to accept the proposition it contains. I am afraid it was a bad day for us when they did so. Our fun is all knocked in the head. In the first place the letter is from Unele Bob, and relates to our cousins, Clarence and Marshall Gordon."

“Are they coming here?” asked Bert, his face brightening with joyous anticipation.

Don looked sharply at his brother for a minute or two before he spoke. “Yes, they’re coming,” said he. “I don’t know what you may think about it, but I am sorry ; and so are father and mother.”

“Then why do they let them come?”

“Because they can’t help it. Father is under heavy obligations to Uncle Bob, who has done him numberless good turns, and he says he can’t well refuse to grant this, the only favor that Uncle Bob has ever asked of him.”

“But why don’t they want Clarence and Marshall here?” asked Bert, who could not see why his parents should object to the visit of relatives whom he and his brother had not seen for many years—so many, in fact, that he could not remember of ever having met them at all. They (that is, Clarence and Marshall) had always lived with their parents in Europe ; and it was only about a year ago that they had taken up their abode in a northern city where their father was engaged in business.

“This will explain everything,” said Don ; and as he spoke, he settled back in his chair and opened the letter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW COMERS.

THAT portion of the letter which Don read was as follows :—

“ And now I come to the matter about which I sat down to write to you. It relates to my two boys, Clarence and Marshall—more particularly to the first. I am very anxious to remove them both from the temptations to which they are exposed in this big city. Since we returned from Europe they have been a source of constant anxiety to their mother and myself. The first thing they did was to make acquaintances and friends among those I should not have chosen for their companions, if I had had the power of selection in my own hands. Being completely engrossed in the cares of business, I could not give the attention to their training that I ought to have done ; and the first thing that brought me to a sense of my duty and my neglect in this matter, was the visit of a police officer, who called at my

office, and informed me that Clarence had been arrested in a saloon for engaging in a brawl over a game of cards——”

“Gracious !” gasped Bert.

“O, he’s a nice bird,” said Don, in great disgust. “And that isn’t the worst of it. He is untruthful and dishonest. His father doesn’t say so, but you can gain that idea from the language he uses. Listen to this :—

“ ‘For engaging in a brawl over a game of cards, and that he would be held until his examination came off, unless I was willing to go his bail.’ ”

“What does that mean ?”

“It means that if his father did not give bonds for his appearance when he was wanted, he would be put into a cell and locked up.”

“I got him out of the scrape,” the letter went on, “and when I came to inquire into his past life I found that his record was not such an one as a father could be proud of. I took him out of school and placed him in my office where he still is ; but I fear I have thrown him directly in the way of temptation instead of taking him out of it. He has begun to develop traits which I did not suppose he possessed, and which lead me to distrust his every word and

act. I cannot put the least faith in him. He cares for nothing in the world but money, and when he gets it, it goes for cigars, lager beer and clothes. Marshall is not very badly contaminated as yet, but he is so easily influenced that I fear for his future, unless he is speedily removed from these surroundings. Now, can you take these two boys and take care of them for the winter, or until I can make some permanent arrangements for them? If I had had my way, I should have sent Clarence to sea six months ago, for I believe that a little wholesome discipline would make a great change in him; but his mother will not listen to it. Something, however, must be done at once. They are both worth saving, and I hope that an acquaintance with Don and Bert, who, I am told, are all that sons should be (Don blushed when he read this, for he could not forget that wrong act that had resulted in his expulsion from the academy), and daily intercourse with them will show my boys that there is something attractive in an upright, honorable life."

This was all. The general's brother was a man of few words, and as this was a subject he did not like to dwell upon, he hurried through with it as

quickly as possible. He evidently wanted that the general should know just what sort of boys he would open his doors to, if he agreed to accept the responsibility urged upon him, but, at the same time, he was anxious that the delinquents should appear in as favorable a light as possible, and so did not say more than he thought to be absolutely necessary.

"Well, I am sorry they are coming," said Bert, as Don folded the letter and placed it in the envelope.

"So am I," said Don.

"The idea of a great big, hulking, beer-drinking, tobacco-smoking, and card-playing boy loafing about our house," continued Bert, betrayed by his excitement into using stronger language than he generally employed, and thinking of Godfrey Evans as he spoke. "I wonder how he became so far gone before his parents found it out!"

"So did I—but father explained it to me—or rather to mother, and I overheard it. He says Uncle Robert sees but little of his family on any day except Sundays. He leaves home early in the morning, and does not return again until nine or ten o'clock at night. The management of the boys is left entirely to their mother, who doesn't care what they do, so long as they keep out of the way and don't trouble

her. As one can't see to them, and the other won't, they have been entirely neglected."

"And this letter has been here a week and we never knew it," said Bert.

"Yes, and a good deal longer than that," said Don; "long enough for the matter to be considered, a favorable answer to be returned, and a second letter to be received from Uncle Bob. That letter states that the boys left Cincinnati on the Emma Deane; and father has just learned from Mr. Jones that she is due at our landing some time to-night or early to-morrow morning."

Bert was sorry that the new-comers were expected so soon. He had hoped to have a week or two in which to think about them, and make up his mind how he would act after they arrived. Although these cousins were the sons of their father's only brother, they were utter strangers to Don and Bert. Their parents said they had seen them once, but as they were only three years old at the time, they could not be expected to remember much about them. Since then Clarence and Marshall had lived altogether in Europe, and Don and Bert had not heard from them on an average of once a year.

"I too am sorry that they are coming so soon,"

said Don, who could tell by the expression of Bert's face what was passing in his mind. "You see now why your idea of a trip to Coldwater must be given up, at least until we know more about our expected friends. At first father thought he would not say anything to us about the contents of this letter, for he did not want to prejudice us against Clarence and Marshall; but afterward he decided that we ought to know what sort of fellows they are, so that we may be on our guard. We are going to have a long talk about it this evening."

And they did, and the whole family was present. It was a kind of council in which the matter was thoroughly discussed, and plans laid for the reception of the expected visitors. The general explained why he did not feel at liberty to refuse his brother's request—this being a private matter is something in which we have no interest—and urged upon his boys the necessity of regulating their own conduct, so that Clarence and his brother might see that there was more happiness, and much more respectability in a sober, well-regulated course of life, than in the career upon which they seemed to have entered. The newcomers, he was sorry to say, had a great many bad habits, and their father hoped that by sending them

into the country for a season they might forget some of them, and by being brought under better influences, be finally led to see the folly of them and induced to abandon them altogether. One thing was certain, the general said: there was no dram-shop in the neighborhood, not even at the landing, and beer-drinking and card-playing were two practices that Clarence would have to forego so long as he remained in that part of the country. Tobacco was plenty, but it was not at all likely that a boy who had been in the habit of buying cigars worth ten and perhaps twenty-five cents apiece, would stoop to a cob-pipe and plug "Varginy." Besides he was to have no money, so his father said, not a cent; and taking it altogether, it seemed as if Clarence must turn over a new leaf while he was under his uncle's roof, whether he wanted to do so or not.

In regard to Marshall, the younger brother, the general had not much to say, for his father had scarcely mentioned him in his letters. But he inferred that he was following in the footsteps of Clarence, and that, being easily led in any direction, there might be some hope for him if he were taken in hand at once.

The unlooked-for intrusion of these discordant

elements upon their quiet, happy family circle, afforded the boys something to talk about that night, and kept them awake long after they ought to have been asleep. Bert did not take it quite so much to heart after the first surprise was over. Indeed he hoped that the visit might prove both pleasant and profitable to all concerned. Clarence and Marshall were his cousins, and Bert had a warm place in his heart for them, even if they were not just such boys as he would have chosen for his companions. Don, on the other hand, took but little pains to conceal the annoyance he felt. Cousin or no cousin, he did not want such a companion as he knew Clarence would prove to be, and he hoped his uncle Robert would hurry and make up his mind to something, so that his visit might be brought to an end as speedily as possible. The expected visitors broke in on his arrangements in a way he did not like. It brought his school term to an end a week sooner than it ought to have been ended. Of course it would not be polite to leave Clarence and Marshall to themselves when they arrived, and in order to give Don and Bert an opportunity to make things pleasant for them, the general decided that the school should close at once.

Morning came at last, and immediately after breakfast the heavy, old-fashioned family carriage was drawn to the door by a span of splendid iron-gray horses, the tutor's trunk was strapped on behind, and he, in company with the general and his two boys, stepped in, and the carriage was driven to the landing. Just as they arrived there, a steamer appeared in the bend, heading up the river. The general signalled to her with his handkerchief, and she landed, took the tutor and his luggage aboard, and continued on her way. The boys watched her in silence until she disappeared around the point. They had grown to like their tutor, and were sorry to see him go; but it was some consolation to them to know that the separation would not be a long one.

The Gray Eagle—that was the name of the steamer that took the tutor away—having disappeared, the boys turned their attention to a thick cloud of smoke farther up the river, and behind a point which jutted out from the right bank. Silas Jones, who was at the landing and expecting goods by the first steamer from Memphis, told the general that the Gray Eagle was the only packet that had gone up the river since midnight, so the boys knew that the smoke they were looking at must come from

the chimneys of some steamer bound to New Orleans. They watched the cloud as it moved slowly along above the trees, and finally at the end of an hour a side-wheel steamer suddenly made her appearance in the bend.

"That's the Emmy Deane," said a well-known voice.

The boys turned and saw Godfrey Evans standing close behind them. He was barefooted as usual, and carried his rifle on his shoulder.

"How do you know it is the Emma Deane?" asked Don.

"Ah! mornin', Mr. Don," exclaimed Godfrey. "Proud to see ye, sar. How's all the folks? Mine is only jest tol'able, thank ye, 'ceptin' the ole woman, an' she's poorly. How do I know that's the Emmy Deane? Kase I know it is, an' I can tell a'most every boat on the river that stops here, too. When she whistles, ye'll see she's got four—two high up an' two low down. Mr. Don," added Godfrey, lowering his voice, "can I see ye jest a minute, please, sar?"

Don, wondering what business Godfrey could have with him, which was of so private a nature that it could not be spoken of in the hearing of his father

and brother, drew off on one side, and the man, after clearing his throat, continued :

“ We’re powerful poor folks, Mr. Don, an’ the ole woman she was tuk down with the fever ’n’ ager last night, an’ done shook the roof clean off’n the house ; an’ Dave, he hain’t got a shoe to bless hisself with.”

“ Well,” said Don, when Godfrey paused and looked at him.

“ Wal, Dave, he wants me to ax ye, Mr. Don, please sar, would ye mind givin’ him five dollars this mornin’, sar, kase ye know ye promised him ten fur breakin’ that pinter pup, an’ we’re powerful poor folks, ye know.”

“ Certainly I’ll give it to him,” replied Don, quickly. “ He can have it at any time for the asking. I would have given it to him yesterday if I had known that he wanted it.”

“ Wal, he didn’t want it yesterday, an’ he wouldn’t a wanted it to-day, only the ole woman’s got the fever ’n’ ager, an’ we’s so poor. He told me to ax ye would ye give it to me, an’ I’ll give it to him, please, sar.”

Don readily consented to this. He produced his pocket-book and handed the five dollars to Godfrey,

who clutched the money and made off with it in such haste that Don looked at him in great surprise.

“What did he want of you?” asked Bert, when his brother came back to the carriage.

“He wanted some of the money I promised David for breaking that pointer,” was the reply.

“O, that reminds me,” said Bert. “How much did you give him?”

“I gave him half of it.”

“And I gave him the other half yesterday, so David is paid up in full, and you owe mother five dollars. Dan dunned me, and I borrowed the money to give him. He came over to see you, but as you were not at home, I acted in your place. Was that right?”

“Perfectly. I told David he could have the money whenever he wanted it. I am somewhat surprised, though, for I understood him to say that he intended to keep some of it to send off those quails with.”

All this while the steamer had been approaching the landing, and the nearer she came, the more certain did the people, who were standing around, declare themselves to be that it was the Emma Deane. At last she whistled, and there proved to be “two high up and two low down;” in other words, there were

four whistles, and being attached to the same steam-pipe, of course they all sounded at once—two uttering notes high up on the musical scale, and the others emitting a deep bass. Then all doubts, if any remained, were cleared away. She was the Emma Deane, and she was going to land. This she did a few minutes afterward. The moment her bow touched the shore, a deck-hand sprang out with a line which he made fast to a convenient tree; a staging was pushed ashore, and the crew began bringing out the goods Silas Jones was expecting from Memphis. The boys ran their eyes over the passengers who were crowded on her boiler-deck, while the general at once made his way on board to hunt up his nephews. He returned about five minutes later, followed by two gentlemanly-looking youths, and these in turn were followed by a negro porter who carried a heavy trunk on his shoulder.

It is hard to tell just what sort of fellows Don expected to see, but it was plain from the expression on his face, and the manner in which he passed through the ceremony of introduction, that he was surprised, to say the least; while Bert's bewilderment was too palpable to escape notice. The latter knew but little of the world, and had somehow got it into

his head that vices of every description came in shapes so easy to be recognised, that any one would know them. When he heard that his cousin Clarence was in the habit of using tobacco and playing cards, he put him down as a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow, much of the same stamp as Godfrey Evans ; but here was a dashing youth, dressed in the latest fashion, who looked as though he might know a thing or two, and who conducted himself in an easy, off-hand manner, that, to diffident little Bert, was perfectly charming. He resembled Godfrey Evans in about the same degree that his own father did. He appeared to be as much at ease as though he had come among friends with whom he had long been acquainted, and his younger brother, Marshall, was not a whit behind him in this respect ; while Bert could not say a word in response to their polite and cordial greeting, and even Don, who was usually self-possessed, hesitated and blushed and looked as embarrassed as though he had been caught in some act of mischief.

The introduction being over, the trunk was strapped in its place behind the carriage, our party all got in, and Don picked up the reins and drove homeward. On the way Don and Bert had leisure to collect their wits a little, and while doing their part toward main-

taining the conversation that followed, devoted themselves principally to making a mental estimate of their visitors—a proceeding on their part which was closely imitated by Clarence and Marshall. What results they arrived at perhaps we shall see by and by.

Clarence would have attracted attention almost anywhere. He was a handsome fellow, and the ease and readiness with which he expressed himself in conversation, astonished Don, who was himself blessed with more than an ordinary command of language. He described with great fluency and animation several interesting and amusing incidents that had fallen under his notice during the journey from Cincinnati, and seemed to be so well posted in every subject that came up for discussion, and yet so modest, that Don began to accuse himself of having been guilty of a very ungenerous act, in that he had allowed himself to become prejudiced against his cousin before he saw him. He told himself that he would have in him a most agreeable companion, and one from whom he could learn something.

Bert formed nearly the same opinion of Marshall. These two sat on the back seat while the rest of the party occupied the one in front, and being left in a

great measure to themselves, imagined by the time they reached home, that they had had opportunity to become well acquainted. They found out not a few of each other's likes and dislikes, and were both pleased to learn that they had many ideas in common. Marshall liked to fish and hunt occasionally, but he liked a game of chess or checkers better, and cards and billiards better than anything. He opened his eyes when he learned that Bert had never seen a billiard table, and that he did not know one card from another. He, Marshall, had been accustomed to these things all his life, he said, but he thought he could get on very well without them. His mother wanted him to give them up, and he was going to do it to please her. He seemed to think a good deal of his mother, and Bert told himself that that was a redeeming trait, and would do much toward bringing him out all right in the end.

The party reached home in due time, and found Mrs. Gordon and her daughters waiting to receive them. The visitors were cordially welcomed, and after a short visit in the parlor, were shown to their room and left to themselves. As soon as Clarence had closed and locked the door, he threw himself into

the nearest chair with the air of one who was badly bored and utterly disgusted.

“How do you like it as far as you have gone?” asked Marshall.

“I don’t like it at all,” was the reply; “and it has gone about as far as it will with me, too. If the old man thinks I am going to vegetate down here for the next six months, he is badly mistaken. I won’t do it to please anybody.”

“You can’t help yourself,” said his brother.

“I can’t! I’ll show you that I can. I’ll write a letter to mother this very night, and tell her that I want money enough to take me home.”

“O, of course that will bring it,” said Marshall, with a laugh which said that he thought it would not. “You know what father said the last thing before we left, don’t you—that we need not write for money, because we couldn’t have a cent?”

“Yes, I know, but I’ll get it, all the same. See there,” said Clarence, exhibiting almost a handful of small change.

“Where did you get that?” demanded his brother.

“Mother gave it to me just before we left home. She said that I might want some spending money, and hinted that when this was gone, I knew where I

could get more. I'll ask for more at once; and if it doesn't come, I'll drop a line to mother telling her that if she wants to see me again, she had better be doing something. That always wakes her up!"

"It has had the desired effect so far, I admit," said Marshall. "But suppose father should get hold of one of those threatening letters, and should write back to you: 'My dear Clarence: You have talked this way often enough. You shan't have a cent.' What would you do then?"

"Well, in the first place, there is no danger that my letters will ever fall into his hands, for mother takes precious good care to put them in the grate as soon as she reads them; and in the next place, I'd make the old man repent such an act the longest day he lived. I'd clear out, and he'd never see me again!"

"O, nonsense!" exclaimed Marshall, tucking up his sleeves preparatory to plunging his hands into the wash-bowl. "You are not the one to cut loose from a comfortable home and go out into the world to make your own living, as long as you can avoid it. You like your ease altogether too well for that. Tell us some other funny story, please."

"There is no funny story about this. I am in

earnest, and you'll see if I don't get the money in less than two weeks. I can't live down here in this wilderness—no billiards, no theatres, no nothing that's interesting. How is one to kill time, I wonder?"

"You must read, and hunt, and fish, and ride on horseback," replied Marshall, in a tone of voice that would have made Bert open his eyes if he could have heard it. "That is the way our worthy cousins put in their leisure moments."

"They must find it highly entertaining. I should expect it of them. Did you ever see two such country bumpkins? Wouldn't they cut a pretty figure in the city? Why, when we were introduced to them they were as dumb as clams."

"Yes; but you'd better take advice now for once in your life, and be very careful of your language and your behavior when you are in the presence of those same country bumpkins. That Don is pretty broad-shouldered, and I notice he's got a grip like a young blacksmith. I found that out when I shook hands with him. If you are as tyrannical and overbearing with him as you are with me sometimes, you may get yourself into business."

Just then the ringing of a bell in the hall brought

Clarence to his feet. "What's that for, I wonder?" he exclaimed.

"Dinner, most likely."

"Dinner at twelve!" said Clarence, glancing at his watch. "And supper at six and bed at half-past eight, I suppose!"

"Probably; and what will trouble you still more, breakfast at six every morning," said Marshall. "You can't lie in bed here till ten or eleven o'clock and then have breakfast sent up to you."

Clarence said something more about "country bumpkins," repeated the resolution he had so suddenly formed that his sojourn under his uncle's roof should be a very short one, and then made all haste to get ready for dinner.

CHAPTER VIII.

DAN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

THE next morning, long before the sun showed himself above the tree-tops, the Evans family were all astir. They always rose at an early hour, and it was probably more from the force of habit than for any other reason, for, with the exception of Mrs. Evans, none of them did any work until after they had eaten breakfast. Even the chores were left until the male members of the family had broken their fast, for Godfrey declared that it was not healthy, in that climate, to breathe too much of the early morning air, it was so laden with miasma and the seeds of fever and ague; but he did not seem to think it at all injurious if inhaled through the fumes of tobacco smoke, and while seated on the bench beside the cabin door. That bench served Godfrey in lieu of an easy-chair. When he was not hunting in the woods or loafing at the landing, he was always to be found there, smoking and thinking.

On the morning of this particular day, Godfrey arose from his "shake down" with the air of a lord, and astonished two members of his family and alarmed another, by giving them all a hearty greeting. When he had dressed himself he filled his pipe, and walking out of the door with a slow and dignified step, stood with his hands on his hips, looking about him as if he were monarch of all he surveyed. Mrs. Evans said to herself that that was the way he used to act in the good old days; while Dan communed thus with himself:

"If me an' pop had been out a diggin' fur that thar bar'l last night, an' had done found it, I should know that that was what ails him this mornin'; but seein' we didn't dig fur the bar'l, I don't know what's the matter of him. He don't walk with that big leg, an' sling on all them extry frills, fur nothin', an' I'm afeared he's smelled out somethin'. If he has——"

Dan did not say what he should do, but he shook his head in the most threatening manner, and having drawn on his clothes, clapped his hat on his head, and hurried out of the door. His father looked at him as he disappeared around the corner of the cabin, but made no sign beyond looking in at the door to

satisfy himself that the rawhide was hanging in its accustomed place.

In a few minutes Dan returned and confronted his sire. His face wore a fierce frown, and he looked mad enough for almost anything. He began operations by jumping up and knocking his heels together, coming down with a jar and with his feet spread out as if he were bracing himself for a shock of some kind. This is an indispensable prelude to all games of fisticuffs in the South and West. No backwoods pugilist ever thinks of going into a fight without thus preparing himself for it. Sometimes a few Indian yells, given with all the power of the lungs, help matters wonderfully. Dan went through the performance just to show his father how angry he was, and to give him some idea of the damage he would do if he only possessed the power. Godfrey looked pleasantly at him, and seated himself on the bench.

“Give me them six dollars an’ six bits, dog-gone my buttons,” sputtered Dan, who could hardly speak plainly enough to be understood. Then he seemed to regain control of his tongue, and without giving his father a chance to reply, went on: “I knowed yesterday that ye was up to something,” said he,

“an’ I knowed this mornin’ when I first seed ye a struttin’ about, that ye’d been an’ done some mean trick. You’ve been a pokin’ into my things. You’ve got my money an’ my powder an’ lead, an’ I want ’em. The money’s mine, an’ I——”

“It’s your’n, is it?” exclaimed Godfrey. “Whar did ye get it, an’ how come ye by it?”

“Didn’t I tell ye I got three an’ a half fur that hind quarter of beef?”

“Yes, but whar did ye get the rest?”

“Didn’t ye tell me it didn’t make no odds to ye whar I got it so long as I did get it?” asked Dan.

“That was yesterday,” answered Godfrey. “It didn’t make no odds to me yesterday, but it’s to-morrer now, an’ it makes a heap of odds. It’s my bounden duty to find out whar ye got it an’ how ye came by it, kase mebbe it wasn’t honest.”

“Whoop!” yelled Dan, jumping up and knocking his heels together in the excess of his rage. “Honest! It’s a heap honester nor it is to go arter dark into a man’s tater-patch an’ dig up the bar’l o’ money he’s got kivered up thar. Now, ole man, I’ll tell ye what’s the gospel truth about that thar bar’l,” added Dan, a bright idea striking him. “If ye’ll give my money back to me, I won’t say nothing

about it; but if ye don't, I'll go straight to the gen'ral——"

"Whoop!" shouted Godfrey, in his turn.

As the word left his lips he jumped up from the bench and made a furious rush toward his son, but did not succeed in laying hands upon him. The place where Dan was standing became suddenly vacant, and a moment afterward a very scared face looked at Godfrey between the rails of the fence that surrounded the cabin.

"Yes, I will," repeated Dan, who felt comparatively safe now. "I'll go straight to the gen'ral an' tell him what ye're up to, an' then what'll become of yer bar'l with the eighty thousand into it?"

"An' what'll become of yer shiny hats an' boots, an' yer circus hosses, an' yer guns that break in two in the middle?" retorted Godfrey, as soon as his rage would allow him to speak.

"I don't care," replied Dan, "I want my six dollars and six bits fust; an' if I don't get 'em, I'll knock all yer 'rangements higher nor the moon. I will, I don't care if I don't sleep in the house fur a month arter it."

"Ye'll never sleep in my house again if ye do that," said Godfrey. "But, Dannie, thar ain't no

use in me an' you fightin' over these few greenbacks, when thar's eighty thousand dollars in gold and silver to be had fur the diggin'."

"I don't want to fight nuther, but I want my money," said Dan.

"Now, Dannie, be a good boy an' let yer poor ole pop take keer on it fur ye."

"No, I won't."

"Kase I'm the oldest an' know the most, ye know, an' it's the properest thing to do."

But Dan only shook his head decidedly, and retreated as his father approached the fence. Godfrey continued to argue the matter, but he could make no impression upon Dan, whose only reply was, "Give me my money;" and his father was finally forced to the conclusion that he must either do it, or have all his hopes of possessing that bar'l of gold blasted. He was well enough acquainted with Dan to know that he never made idle threats, and he saw that he must compromise in some way, and that too, if possible, without any loss to his dignity.

"Now, Dannie," said he, "I hope ye see that yer pop is a heap smarter nor ye be, don't yer?"

"Give me them six dollars an' six bits," replied Dan.

“No, ye can’t have ’em—bar’l or no bar’l, that’s flat—till ye tell me whar ye got ’em. I’m yer pop, an’ it’s my bounden duty to` know how ye come by ’em.”

Dan hesitated. If he complied with his father’s demand, he might whistle for the other five dollars which Don Gordon still owed David—or, rather, which he *would* owe him as soon as the pointer was field-broken. If he refused to comply, he would lose six dollars and seventy-five cents, and that was a small fortune to him. No matter what he decided to do, he had a fine prospect of losing money, unless—

“Yes, pop,” he replied suddenly, trying hard to conceal the excitement occasioned by a lucky thought that just then occurred to him, “I know yer a heap smarter nor I be, an’ I’ll be a good son to ye, an’ never try to fool ye no more.”

“That’s a good boy, Dannie,” said his father, thrusting his hand through the fence in the hope that Dan would lay his own within it. “Put it thar, my lad.”

Dan came a step nearer to the fence, but his actions indicated that he had no desire to shake hands with his father. On the contrary, he kept safely out of his reach.

"No, I'll never fool ye no more," said he, "honor bright. An' will ye promise, honor bright, to give me the money, all of it, when I tell ye whar I got it?"

"In course I will."

"Say honor bright."

His father said it, placing his hand in his pocket at the same time to show that he was ready to keep his word, and Dan continued:

"Silas Jones give it to me. I made five dollars outen him choppin' wood."

"That's the way to get rich, my boy," said Godfrey. "Allers do sich little chores when ye can get 'em to do, an' hold fast to the money, an' some day ye'll be wuth yer thousands."

"Now hand it out here," said Dan.

"Yes, I'll hand it out, but not now. I must fust ax Silas about it. I'll have business down to the landin' some time to-day, I reckon, an' arter I ax Silas, I'll give ye the money."

"He owes me ten dollars more," cried Dan, greatly alarmed, and hoping that his father would catch at the bait thus thrown out.

"I'm glad to hear it," was the reply. "Yer rich already, Dannie, and won't need none of the bar'l

when we find it. But if he give ye five dollars an' owes ye ten more, ye must a made—" here Godfrey stopped and counted his fingers—"ye must a made fifteen outen him choppin' wood. Didn't ye promise ye wouldn't never try to fool me no more?"

"Wal, come nigher to the fence," said Dan, growing desperate and sinking his voice almost to a whisper, so that those in the cabin might not hear his words, "an' I'll tell ye this time, honor bright. Ye know the ten dollars Dave was goin' to get fur breakin' that pinter pup, don't ye? Wal, I jest slipped up thar an' axed Mr. Bert would he lend Dave five of it now to get mam a new dress with, an' he said yes, he would. That's whar the money came from, pop, sure's you live."

Godfrey was satisfied of it; and while he secretly admired the boy's shrewdness, he reproached himself for not being smart enough to take advantage of the opening, and thus securing the ten dollars for his own use. Without a word more he pulled out Dan's money and gave it to him, then walked back to the bench, picked up his pipe, and went off into a brown study. He never came out of it until he was called to breakfast, and even then he hardly aroused himself sufficiently to know what was going on around

him. Having satisfied his appetite, he took down his rifle and left the cabin. As soon as he was out of sight, Dan arose, put on his hunting equipments and also disappeared, leaving David and his mother to themselves.

Godfrey made his way toward General Gordon's house, and on the way stopped at the barn, where the hostler was at work hitching the grays to the family carriage. By a little skilful questioning he learned that the general and his boys were going down to the landing to meet some visitors, who were coming from Cincinnati on the Emma Deane; and this piece of information caused a slight change in the programme he had laid out before leaving home. He had come over there on purpose to see Don Gordon, and secure the balance of the money he had promised David for breaking the pointer. But he wanted to see him privately, and believing that his object could be better attained by waiting a while, he decided to postpone the interview until the Gordons reached the landing. The sooner he obtained possession of the money the better, Godfrey told himself, as he looked out of one of the stable windows. There was Dan coming up the road, and his father knew instinctively what it was that brought him in that direction so

early in the morning. Dan, however, did not go near the barn, for he had seen his father stop there. He kept on toward the landing, and when he was out of sight, Godfrey shouldered his rifle and followed him.

We have already seen how Godfrey operated when he thought the proper time had arrived. Watching his opportunity he secured an interview with Don Gordon before Dan did, and had no trouble at all in inducing him to hand over five dollars of David's money to him. Godfrey was in ecstasies. He shut his fingers tight about the bill and hurried away as if he feared that Don might repent and want the money back after he had time to think about what he had done. Before he had made half a dozen steps he was confronted by his son Dan, whose face wore an expression that Godfrey did not like to see there. He knew as well what was passing in the boy's mind as he did five minutes afterward when Dan told him of a determination he had formed.

"Why, hallo, Dannie!" exclaimed Godfrey, as if the meeting was most unexpected. "What brung ye down here so 'arly? I've got that other five dollars fur ye."

"O, ye have, have ye?" said Dan.

“Yes. Ye see, I thought mebbe ye wouldn’t like to ax fur this one, seein’ as how ye axed fur the fust, so I done tuk the trouble to do it myself. Now, Dannie, I’ll borrer half of it from ye, an’ pay ye back when we find that bar’l—to-night mebbe !”

Dan drew a long breath of relief. This was a piece of generosity he had not looked for, and he hastened to assure his father that he was entirely satisfied with the proposition, adding :

“Do ye know what I’d a done if ye’d cheated me outen them five dollars ? Wal, I’d a went straight to the gen’ral an’ told him about that thar bar’l—yes, I would !”

This was just what Godfrey was afraid of, and the only thing that led him to divide his ill-gotten gains with Dan. There was a dangerous light in his eyes, but controlling himself he answered, very good-naturedly :

“Wal, ye see I didn’t mean to cheat ye, don’t ye ? Now go an’ git the bill broke over to Silas Jones’. I’d go myself, but if I do, he’ll want me to pay what I owe him, an’ I ain’t ready to do that yet. He can wait till we find that bar’l.”

Dan took the bill and went away, revolving in his mind a dozen wild schemes for securing undisputed

possession of the whole of it. Godfrey watched him until he disappeared in the store, and then leaned on his rifle and went off into another brown study.

“The ongrateful an’ ondutiful scamp!” thought he. “He’s got the upper hand agin me, that boy has, an’ I’ve got to give him half them five dollars, or have my plans busted. I wish now I hadn’t told him about that bar’l. I’d go an’ dig fur it myself o’nights, only its kinder lonesome bein’ all by myself in the dark. Folks do say that all sort of critters an’ strange things is abroad arter night, an’ as I’ve seed ’em an’ felt ’em myself, I’m jest a trifle——”

Godfrey finished the sentence by shrugging his shoulders. He would not have acknowledged, even to himself, that he was afraid, but that was the plain English of it. He would hardly go to the wood-pile alone after dark. It was true that he had seen some strange things which he could not account for, and which frightened him almost out of his wits. He had seen figures flitting along the road in front of him when he returned home from the landing after dark, and on two or three occasions, something with great eyes of fire had glared at him from a fence corner behind the general’s barn, and compelled him to leave the road and go around through the fields to

reach his house. On other occasions he had been suddenly and mysteriously tripped up when there was not a human being within sight of him, and his hat had been dashed from his head by invisible hands.

All these things, however, could have been satisfactorily explained, if Godfrey had only possessed the courage to inquire into them. If he had caught one of the figures which ran along the road before him and disappeared in so bewildering a fashion, he would have found that it was not a spirit, but a human being—a night prowler who had designs upon the general's smoke-house. If he had walked up to the eyes of fire that glared so savagely at him, he would have discovered that they were simply holes in a pumpkin, which had been scooped out to admit a lighted candle, and he would have seen Don Gordon lying on the ground at a little distance convulsed with laughter. The invisible hands which knocked off his hat and pulled his feet out from under him so unexpectedly, would, upon investigation, have proved to be strong cords stretched from one side of the lane to the other, managed by the same spirit of mischief who had placed the lighted candle in the hollow pumpkin, and who had put them there for the pur-

pose of entertaining himself at the expense of a crowd of darkies, who were expected to pass along the lane on their way home from protracted meeting.

All these things happened during the previous autumn, but Godfrey had not forgotten them. Don had then just returned from school; and the life he led on his father's plantation was so monotonous, that he sometimes thought he could not exist much longer unless something happened to cheer him up a little. As nothing happened of its own accord, Don went to work to create opportunities to let off some of his surplus energy in a good hearty laugh; and to further this end, he made use of some of the numerous schoolboy devices he learned while at the academy. You will know how well he succeeded when we tell you that in less than a week after he began operations, the story got abroad that the general's lane was haunted, and there was not a negro in the neighborhood who could be hired to pass through there after dark. Godfrey Evans himself would not do it. He always took to the fields.

We do not say that Don passed his leisure hours in the most profitable manner, for we know he did not. We are only telling the story of his life, and telling it as it happened not so very long ago. That

Don himself knew that he might be better employed, was proved by the fact that he did all this alone, not even taking Bert into his confidence. He little thought then that his love of mischief would one day be the means of getting him into a scrape the like of which he had never dreamed of, but such was the fact ; and we must hasten on to tell how it was brought about.

CHAPTER IX.

OLD JORDAN'S "HAUNT."

DAN came back to his father with the money simply because he could think of no way of avoiding it that did not involve more personal risk than he cared to encounter. He took pains, however, to keep out his share, and gave Godfrey only two dollars and a half, accompanying it with the assurance that in his (Dan's) estimation, his father had been guilty of a very mean trick, and one that he ought to be heartily ashamed of.

"Didn't ye tell me ye was satisfied?" asked Godfrey.

"I know it, but I told ye so kase I was afeared if I said I wasn't, I wouldn't get none of the money. O, I know ye, pop, an' I don't see why ye can't go to work an' make some money of yer own, 'stead of ropin' in on me an' spilin' my plans. If ye'd a kept outen the way, I'd a had ten dollars as easy as fallin' off a log."

Godfrey was too much interested in his own thoughts to carry the discussion any farther. He breathed easier when he felt the money in his fingers, and because he had no pocket that would hold it, he kept it in his hand, and stood around with the rest of the hangers-on, and saw the Emma Deane come up to the landing and deposit the passengers and cargo she had brought. Like the rest he wondered who the fashionably-dressed young gentlemen were who got into the general's carriage and rode off with him; and he would have wondered still more had he been able to look far enough into the future to see that he, the ragged, worthless Godfrey Evans, would one day be the trusted companion of one of those spruce young fellows, and that he would be intimately connected with him in a certain piece of business which, when it became known, would set all the tongues in the country for miles around in motion.

The general and his nephews drove off; the Emma Deane, as soon as her freight and passengers were landed, backed out into the stream and once more turned her head toward New Orleans; the people who had been brought to the landing by the sound of her whistle spent a few minutes in exchanging notes, and then began to disperse; and finally the

street was entirely deserted except by a few of the most persistent loafers, who sat on the boxes in front of Silas Jones's store, and whittled and chewed tobacco for want of a better way of passing the time. Among these was Godfrey, who sunned himself for an hour or two like a turtle on his log, and then, with a deep sigh of regret, shouldered his rifle and bent his steps toward the woods in which his hopeful son Dan had long ago disappeared.

When the afternoon began to draw to a close, nearly the same scenes which we have already described were enacted at Godfrey's humble abode. The scattered family began to come in, one after the other, and they found Godfrey sitting on the bench smoking his pipe. Dan had a bunch of squirrels and a fine wild turkey thrown over his shoulder; David brought another dozen of quails which Don Gordon's pointer had stood for him; and Mrs. Evans carried in her pocket a dollar which she had earned with her needle that day. Fortunately Godfrey did not know of that. If he had he would at once have set his wits at work to conjure up some plan to obtain possession of it. David was again called upon to chop the wood, for Dan had disappeared immediately after skinning the squirrels he brought (he had gone

off to hunt up another hiding-place for his valuables), and Godfrey was so wearied with his hard day's work that he could not have lifted an axe if he had tried. So David cut the wood and kindled the fire, and his mother cooked the supper, and Godfrey ate two men's share of it, and then once more seated himself on the bench and dozed until dark. He slept two hours or more, and was aroused by Dan, who wanted to know if he was going to make an effort to find the barrel that night. Godfrey replied that he was, and started up with much alacrity; but his enthusiasm seemed to die away utterly when he rubbed his eyes and looked about him. He could see literally nothing. It was as dark as it ever gets to be. The cabin and the clearing seemed to be surrounded by solid walls of ebony. There was not a ray of light to be seen in any direction, nor even a star.

"Splendid night," said Dan. "Nothing can't see us!"

"Yes," answered his father, "an' we can't see nothing, too!"

"Wal, I reckon ye know whar that tater-patch was, don't ye? Ye said ye did."

"Yes, I do; but thar was ten acres into it, Dannie,

an' that's a power of ground to dig over with one shovel."

"But jest think of the eighty thousand," said Dan.

That was just what Godfrey did think of, and it was the only thing that could have induced him to brave the darkness and the terrors of the general's lane, and undertake so herculean a task as digging up ten acres of ground with one shovel. Was there not some way in which he could secure the contents of the barrel, or at least a portion of them, without the expenditure of any great amount of energy and strength?

"Dannie," said he, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder and speaking in a low, confidential tone, "I've been thinkin' about something to-day, an' when ye know what it is, I want ye to tell me if I ain't the best pop in the world to ye. I'm gettin' old, Dannie, an' my joints is stiff, an' the rheumatiz bothers me fearful, an' 'tain't healthy to be out arter dark, kase of the fever 'n ager—leastwise fur an ole man like me; but fur an' amazin' strong, strappin' feller like yerself, it don't make no matter. Now, Dannie, if ye'll go an' dig up that thar bar'l by yer-

self, I'll give ye half of it, plump down, jest as soon as we open it—the very minute."

"Wal, I won't do it," said Dan, promptly.

"What fur?" asked his father.

"Kase why, fur two reasons: If I dig up that thar bar'l all by myself, I'll jest hold fast to the hul of it, an' go snacks with nobody."

"Hadn't ye oughter give me something fur tellin' ye about it?" inquired his father.

As Dan could not answer this question in any other way than by a reply in the affirmative, he did not answer it all, but went on to state his second reason.

"An' in the next place," said he, "I don't know whar the tater-patch was—thar's something else planted there now, I reckon—an' if I did, ye wouldn't ketch me out thar alone on sich a night as this, I'll bet ye. Thar's something white walks around out thar!"

"Don't—don't, Dannie!" exclaimed Godfrey, casting frightened glances on all sides of him.

"Wal, ye know it as well as me, don't ye? I'll go with ye an' do my share of the diggin', but I won't go alone—that's flat!"

Godfrey groaned, and for a moment was on the

point of backing squarely out, and saying that he didn't believe that the barrel was there; and if it was it might stay there for all he would do toward digging it up. But he did not back out. He had the best of reasons for believing that the barrel *was* there, and that it was full of gold and silver. A little extra exertion might put him in possession of it. Perhaps with the very first blow of the shovel he might strike the treasure, and then his troubles would all be over. The visions of ease and happiness which this thought conjured up, gave zeal to his flagging spirits and courage to his heart; and picking up his hat, which had fallen from his head while he was dozing on the bench, he told Dan to lead on, and they would find that barrel if all the white things in the country should come there to scare them away.

Together they moved off in the darkness, and made their way to the lane behind the general's barn, where Dan had hidden the spade in the fence corner.

It was the work of but a few seconds to find the implement, and then the father and son climbed the fence and struck off across the fields toward the potato-patch where the barrel was buried. When they reached it they found that the field was still planted to potatoes, and Dan noticed, with no little uneasiness,

that it was closer to the house than he would like to have had it. The noise of the spade striking against the barrel—when they found it—or a word uttered in too loud a tone of voice, would arouse Don Gordon's hounds, and they would alarm the family, the members of which they could see passing back and forth before the windows through which the lights shone.

"Say, pop," said Dan, suddenly; "won't they see the holes in the mornin'? An' if they keep on findin' 'em, won't they think thar's somethin' up, an' watch to see who it is that's a diggin' 'em?"

"No, they won't, kase they won't see 'em," replied his father. "We'll dig down till we find thar ain't no bar'l thar, an' then we'll shove the dirt back again, an' dig in some other place."

"How deep'll we have to go?"

"O, not much more'n the deepness of a bar'l, kase why, ye see Jordan wouldn't have no time to dig a deep hole to kiver up the bar'l in, when he knowed that the Yanks was a comin'. He done a good thing fur us, Jordan did, in runnin' away without tellin' his missus whar that bar'l was hid. Now, Dannie, let's try right here fust. Ye begin, kase yer the youngest, an' I'll set down an' smoke an' watch ye

till yer tired. Now bar in mind that yer workin' fur eighty thousand dollars! Throw it out with the fust shovelful an' I'll give ye half!"

One to have watched Dan's movements would have thought that he meant to accomplish something. He peeled off his coat and threw it on the ground, dashed his hat down beside it, tucked up his sleeves, moistened his hands and brought them together with a loud slap, seized the shovel and thrust it twice into the ground, bringing out each time scarcely more than a good-sized handful of earth, and then stopped and looked all around the field as far as his eyes could reach in the darkness.

"Ten acres *is* a heap o' ground, pop," said he.

"Never mind that, Dannie," replied his father, scratching a match on his shirt sleeve and applying it to the bowl of his pipe. "Thar's a bar'l with eighty thousand dollars in gold an' silver into it buried somewhar about here, an' we must have it if we have to dig up the whole state of Missip. Laws a massy! what's the matter of ye?" he exclaimed; for Dan had stooped down and seized his arm with a gripe that almost brought from him a cry of pain.

Dan stooped still lower, pointed with his finger and said in a husky whisper,

“Pop, jest look a thar !”

The tone in which these words were uttered sent the cold chills all over Godfrey. His breath came in short, quick gasps, his knees knocked together, and he slowly and painfully arose from the ground, turning his head as he did so, and looking in the direction Dan pointed. There, almost within reach of them, so close apparently that he could have touched it with the shovel, if he had been so disposed, was a little ball of fire which glowed and sparkled as he looked at it, then faded almost entirely away for an instant, and anon glowed and sparkled with greater brilliancy than before. Godfrey's under jaw dropped down, his pipe fell to the ground and for a moment he gazed as if fascinated ; then he reached for the shovel, and with long, noiseless steps glided across the field toward the lane, closely followed by Dan, who hardly dared to wait long enough to pick up his coat and hat, so frightened was he. Neither of them spoke until they were fairly in the “big road” which led to the cabin, and then Dan said, in a suppressed whisper :

“ What was it, pop ?”

“ It's one of them haunts with eyes of fire like I used to see last fall,” replied his father, looking back

to make sure that the object, whatever it was, was not following him.

“But this only had one eye, pop!”

“No odds. They all b’long to the same breed, whether they’ve got one eye or a dozen. Ole nigger Hudson told me he seed one onet that was all éyes all over his head. Dannie, that was the fust time I ever was elost enough to one of them critters to see him wink!”

“Say, pop,” exclaimed Dan, suddenly, “I reckon we’d best give up lookin’ fur that thar bar’l, kase mebbe that’s ole Jordan’s haunt come back to keep folks away from it.”

Godfrey stopped and looked at his son.

“I’ll bet ye’ve hit centre, Dannie,” said he, after thinking a moment. “But if that’s so, we was elost to whar the bar’l is, or else the haunt wouldn’t a been thar. It’ll save us a heap o’ diggin’, Dannie!”

“I’ll bet ye don’t get me nigh that tater patch no more,” said Dan, decidedly.

“All right. I’ll go myself, an’ ye shan’t have none of the money. Then what’ll become of yer shiny boots an’ yer circus hosses, and yer fine guns that break in two in the middle?”

Dan made no answer. He did not like to lose all

these nice things on which he had set his heart, but there was old Jordan's "haunt" (that is a term which some people in the South apply to what we call a ghost), of which he stood in great fear. He could not then make up his mind just what he would do in the future, so he said nothing more, and neither did his father. They finished their walk in silence, and reaching the cabin, went to bed and tried to go to sleep. But that was for a long time quite impossible. The remembrance of their evening's experience kept them awake, and it was not until the gray streaks of dawn began to stream in through the cracks in the cabin walls, that they fell into an uneasy slumber. They arose at the usual hour, however, and David chopped wood while his mother cooked breakfast, and Dan loafed and Godfrey sat on the bench and smoked and meditated.

The meal over, Dan shouldered his rifle and disappeared, and Godfrey, because he could not make up his mind to do anything else, resumed his pipe and his meditations, from which he was aroused by the sight of a stranger coming along the road from the direction of General Gordon's. Godfrey looked closely at him, and saw that he was one of the two young men whom he had seen land from the steamer

Emma Deane on the previous day. He carried a gun of some description in his hands, a game-bag hung over his shoulder, and he was dressed in a hunting suit of the latest and most fashionable cut. He walked leisurely along, stopping now and then and looking about as if he were searching for some object to try his skill upon.

“Humph!” sneered Godfrey, who at once took a dislike to the hunter on account of his good clothes. “Yer a nice lookin’ chap to be loafin’ about with a gun in yer hands. I’ll take my ole Betsey Jane an’ beat the hind sights off’n a hul army of yer. That’s jest what makes me so savage agin everybody. What this feller’s clothes cost would keep me an’ my family in grub all the winter!”

While Godfrey was talking thus to himself, the stranger stopped again, raised his gun quickly to his shoulder and fired, the weapon making a report scarcely louder than that of an ordinary gun cap. Godfrey sneered again, and was about to give it as his private opinion that such a load as that would not kill anything, when he was surprised to see a squirrel leave the very topmost branch of a tall hickory that stood by the roadside, and come to the ground dead. The hunter loaded his weapon before

he went to pick up his game, and Godfrey saw that he carried a breech-loader. He became interested at once, and began to have some respect for the stranger who had shown himself to be no mean marksman. He arose and took his pipe out of his mouth.

"How do?" said he, as he went to meet the hunter. "I 'lowed that ye wouldn't get nothing that shot, no how. Ye wouldn't take no offence if I should ax ye to let me see that we'pon o' your'n?"

"Certainly not," said the stranger politely, removing the cartridge and handing the rifle to Godfrey. "You do not often see guns of this description down here, I suppose?"

"I never seed one jest like this afore. I reckon yer from some city up North, ain't ye?"

"Yes; I am Clarence Gordon, and my brother and I are down here on a visit to our cousins, Don and Bert. You are Mr. Evans, I believe."

"Sarvent, sar," said Godfrey, who could not remember that any one had ever put a handle to his name before. He was flattered by this show of respect, and Clarence could not have approached him in any way better calculated to gain his good will.

"Well, Mr. Evans, I hope we shall see much of

each other," said Clarence. "It is possible that I may stay here until spring, that is, if there is good hunting in the neighborhood; is there?"

"Ye couldn't come to a better place, if that's what ye want," said Godfrey.

"It is just what I want. I am very fond of it, but I know but little about it, having always lived in the city, and I shall need somebody to teach me. I know of no one more capable of acting as my instructor than yourself."

Clarence saw by the vacant, bewildered expression on the man's face that he did not understand his fine language, so he hastened to add:—

"I am told that you are a fine shot with the rifle and the best hunter in the country. You never come from the woods without something to show as a proof of your skill."

"Wal, that thar's a fact," said Godfrey, who now began to see what Clarence was getting at. "I know right whar all the game rises, an' as fur larnin' folks—wal, thar's my two boys. They didn't know nothin' when I fust took 'em in hand, an' to-day thar ain't nobody about here can beat 'em."

"Then you are just the man I want, and I wish

you would take me in hand. Squirrels are plenty about here, I suppose?"

"Ye can't run amiss of 'em."

"Any deer or turkeys?"

"Now, stranger, yer jest a shoutin'! Is thar any? I killed twenty-three deer last winter, an' massy knows how many turkeys, kase I never kept count of 'em."

"Are you too busy to go out in the woods with me for a little while?"

"Wal, I *have* got a sight o' work to do, that's a fact," said Godfrey, who always tried to make it appear that his time was fully occupied, "but I reckon it might wait till I get back."

"I have some cigars in my pocket," said Clarence, glancing at Godfrey's dingy cob-pipe, "and perhaps you would like to shoot my rifle a few times, just to see how a brecch-loader works."

This made Godfrey sure that his work could wait. He hastened into the cabin, and presently returned with his gun on his shoulder and his bullet-pouch under his arm. After he had loaded the weapon, the two climbed over the fence and disappeared in the woods.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT GODFREY'S VISITOR WANTED.

GODFREY and his visitor had not gone very far into the woods, before the former told himself that if Clarence had come out there for the purpose of hunting squirrels, he certainly knew very little of the nature of the animals of which he was in search. He talked incessantly, and in a tone of voice loud enough to frighten all the wild animals for a quarter of a mile around. He did not say "squirrel" once, and neither did he appear to be anxious to find any, for he was more interested in studying the face of his companion, than in searching the tree tops where the game was most likely to be found. So closely did he watch Godfrey that the latter became uneasy ; and when he could no longer endure his scrutiny he said, suddenly :

"Do ye think ye ever seed me afore, Mr. Clarence, or what's the matter of ye? Yer tongue says one thing to me, an' yer face says another."

"Well, what does my face say?" asked Clarence.

"I can't quite seem to make out, an' that's why I axed ye. Ye look as though ye wanted to say something to me and didn't know how to begin."

"Mr. Evans, you would soon make yourself rich if you were to turn fortune-teller," said Clarence. "You have hit the nail squarely on the head. Have a weed?"

As he spoke, he thrust his hand into one of the pockets of his game-bag, and brought it out again filled with cigars. Either by accident or design he brought something else, too—something that fell on the ground at Godfrey's feet, and at which he gazed as if fascinated. It was the cob-pipe he had lost the night before in General Gordon's potato patch. After making sure that it was his own property, he looked toward Clarence, who could scarcely refrain from laughing outright, so utterly astounded and bewildered did Godfrey seem to be.

"Whar did ye get it?" he demanded, as soon as he could speak, "an' how came ye by it?"

"I found it in the potato patch where you and Dan were digging last night. You did not find the eighty thousand, did you? Why, what's the matter with you?"

Clarence was not a little surprised at the effect of his words. They seemed to take away all Godfrey's strength, and to crush him completely. He wilted before the boy's eyes like a blade of grass that had been struck by the frost. He looked around for a place to sit down, but as he could not find any to suit him, he sat down right where he was and groaned aloud.

"What's the matter with you?" repeated Clarence.

"Who told you that was my pipe?" asked Godfrey.

"My intuition."

"Yer what?"

"My instinct."

Godfrey looked more bewildered than ever. "Ye mean that the haunt told ye, don't ye?" said he.

"The haunt!" repeated Clarence. "What's that?"

"Why, the sperrit; the—the—ole Jordan's ghost. He was thar, kase I seed him. Whar was you, Mr. Clarence?"

"I was in the house, where all honest folks were at that time of the night. Did you say you saw a ghost?"

"I did say so, an' I done seed it, too."

"What did it look like?"

“I didn’t see all of him—only jest the eye; an’ that was a watchin’ us, kase I could see it wink.”

“Where was it?” asked Clarence, elevating his eye-brows.

“Down in the fence corner, clost by that big butternut tree.”

The boy stared, then laid down his rifle and seated himself on the nearest log. He seemed to be very much impressed by what he had heard.

“I knowed all the time that you didn’t come out here to shoot no squirrels,” said Godfrey, “kase if they was what ye wanted, ye could a found a cart-load of ’em nigher to the gen’ral’s house. Now, what be ye a goin’ to do about it? Be ye goin’ to tell yer uncle?”

“That depends entirely upon yourself,” was the reply, which quickly put all Godfrey’s fears at rest. “I would much rather help you dig up the barrel and then divide its contents with you—that is, if there is any barrel there, and we have a chance of finding it.”

As Godfrey had already committed himself he knew that it was too late to deny anything, so he replied that to the best of his knowledge and belief the barrel was hidden somewhere in that potato-patch; and

at the boy's request he went on to tell why he thought so. He told him the story of the buried treasure just as he had told it before to the members of his family, and Clarence listened to every word. When Godfrey ended his tale he questioned him closely; and when he got up half an hour afterward to stretch his arms and legs, he believed as firmly as Godfrey did that there was a fortune concealed in his uncle's potato-patch. He said so too, and proposed to Godfrey that they should search for it together, and, when they found it, divide the contents, whatever they might be.

"There is one thing about it," continued Clarence; "two are enough to engage in any such enterprise as this, and I'll have nothing whatever to do with it, unless you promise that Dan shall be left in the background. We don't want him."

"No fear about him," replied Godfrey. "He seed the haunt as well as me, an' says he won't go thar no more."

"I am glad of it, and I hope he will stick to his resolution," said Clarence. "But, in order to make sure of it, you had better tell him that you are not going near the field again yourself. You can slip away from him every night, I suppose?"

“I reckon I can; but if ye was in the house last night, whar all honest folks was, how did ye find out about this bar’l, Mr. Clarence? An’ who brung ye this pipe an’ told ye it was mine?”

This was the third or fourth time that Godfrey had asked this question during their interview, which had already lasted more than an hour, and Clarence replied now as he had done before—

“I can’t tell you just at present. I may tell you some day after you and I get to be good friends, and I find out that I can trust you. When you become better acquainted with me, you will see that I have a way of finding out a good many things.”

The two talked for an hour longer on these matters, and at the end of that time Godfrey was satisfied that what he had at first believed to be a dire misfortune, had turned out to be the luckiest thing that ever happened to him. He knew that Dan could never be induced to go near that potato-patch again in the dark, for he had been frightened out of a year’s growth already; but Godfrey needed an assistant all the same, and here was one worth having. Godfrey was astonished at the courage the boy exhibited. Clarence scouted the idea of haunts and ghosts and all other things of like character, and

although he did not pretend to account for the invisible hands that had so often tripped Godfrey up and knocked his hat from his head, he was sure that there was nothing supernatural about them, and promised that if any such pranks were played on Godfrey while he was near, he would find out how they were done, and who was to blame for them. They came to a perfect understanding on every point that arose regarding their future actions ; but there were some things connected with the past that remained a sealed book to Godfrey. The latter would have given every thing he possessed to know how Clarence came by the pipe that he had dropped in the potato-patch, and how he had found out who the owner was. He wanted to know how the boy had learned of the existence of the barrel with the eighty thousand dollars in it ; how he had found out what his (Godfrey's) name was ; how it came that he could recognise him the moment he saw him ; and why he offered to assist him in looking for the barrel. If he had been like most nephews, he would have gone straight to his uncle and told him what was going on in his potato-patch after dark. Godfrey tried his best to surprise or coax Clarence into giving him some information on these points, but without the least success ;

and he was finally obliged to make up his mind that they were mysteries that time only could clear away.

Another thing that surprised and delighted Godfrey was the condescension and familiarity with which the boy treated him. Clarence was, at the same time, much more respectful to him than Dan was, and Godfrey already began to feel perfectly at ease in his presence. He saw the force of one command that Clarence laid upon him, and readily promised to obey it, namely : that no matter how intimate they might be while they were by themselves, there was to be none of that sort of thing should they chance to meet in company. They must meet as strangers, and never so much as look at each other. They did not want to arouse anybody's curiosity or suspicions, and so they could not be too careful.

When the matter had been thoroughly discussed and they knew just what they were going to do, they arose and walked slowly towards the cabin. They stopped on the way to shoot a few squirrels, and Godfrey, surprised at the accuracy of the little breech-loader, which seemed as light as a feather beside his long, heavy muzzle-loader, declared that he would have one exactly like it, just as soon as he received his share of the contents of the barrel. They held

another short consultation when they reached the clearing, and after each had promised to be at the general's barn as soon after dark as he could get there, Clarence started homeward, while Godfrey filled his pipe, and sat down to smoke and think. He was in such a fever of suspense that he never thought of getting himself any dinner, and even when supper time came, he could scarcely arouse himself from his air-castle building, long enough to eat his share of the corn-bread and squirrels. When it began to grow dark he grew more restless than ever, and his impatience to be at work increased every minute. He was not afraid of old Jordan's haunt so long as he was in the presence of the general's nephew, and neither was he any longer afraid of the work he might have to do before the barrel would be brought to light ; for Clarence had discoursed in such glowing language of the comforts and pleasures that could be purchased for eighty thousand dollars, that Godfrey would have thought nothing of digging up twenty acres with a single spade, if he could obtain that amount of money by so doing.

“Dannie,” said Godfrey, who saw that the boy was loitering about as if waiting for something, “it's

time fur us to be lookin' fur that bar'l agin, I reckon."

"Wal, ye can look then, if ye want to," was the dutiful reply, "but I don't stir one inch. I don't want to see ole Jordan's haunt agin, an' I don't b'lieve the bar'l's thar, nohow."

"Ye've hit centre agin, Dannie, like ye allers do," replied his father. "I don't b'lieve it's thar nuther; an' if it is, ten acres is too much ground fur two fellers to dig up."

"Then whar be yer goin'?" asked Dan, as Godfrey arose to his feet and picked up his hat.

"Wal, I ain't agoin' nowhars; but I can't sleep arter losin' them eighty thousand, so I am goin' out to walk about a bit afore goin' to bed. Ye go in an' stay with yer mam, like a good boy, an' yer poor ole pop'll go out an' think over his hard luck."

These words, and the way they were spoken, were enough to arouse Dan's suspicions at once. His father never called him a good boy or addressed him in that wheedling tone, unless he had an object to gain. And the fact that he was going off alone in the dark was another thing that looked suspicious. He had not done such a thing for long months; and after a little reflection Dan very natually arrived at

the conclusion that there was something going on that his father did not want him to know anything about. He went into the house and stayed a minute or two, and then came out and hurried down the road towards General Gordon's lane.

Meanwhile Godfrey was making the best of his way toward the barn, where he expected to meet his new friend, Clarence. He walked with noiseless footsteps, casting anxious glances on all sides of him, and acting altogether like a man who expected to encounter some terrible danger. Indeed this was just what he did expect. He opened the creaking gate that led from the lane into the barn-yard, and was frightened almost out of his senses when he saw a dark figure rise suddenly into view and come toward him. His first impulse was to take to his heels; but he checked it and drew a long breath of relief when he heard a well-known voice say, in no very amiable tones :

“Have you arrived at last? I began to think you were never coming.”

“Yes, I've come,” replied Godfrey, “but I 'most wish I had stayed to hum. 'Tain't honest, sich work as this yere hain't. If thar's a bar'l with eighty thousand dollars in gold an' silver into it, hid in the

gen'ral's tater-patch, we'd oughter tell him, 'stead of goin' an' diggin' it up ourselves !"

"Hallo ! what's come over you all of a sudden ?" demanded Clarence, angrily. "You didn't talk this way when I last saw you."

"I know it ; but it was daylight then."

"Yes ; and now that it is dark you have turned coward, have you ?"

"Wal—no ! but if I should see ole Jordan's white coat down thar in that tater-patch, I do think in my soul it would be the last of me."

"Well, you'll not see him or his white coat, either. You haven't heard of him for long years, and who knows but he is dead ?"

"I'm sartin he is," returned Godfrey, earnestly.

"Then you have nothing to fear from him."

"Not from him, I know ; but his haunt is what bothers me. I've seed that once, an' nobody can't make me say I didn't."

"I'll promise you that you shall never see it again," said Clarence, impatiently. "Why, man alive, just think of it ! Some people would be willing to work and slave for a whole life time to make forty thousand dollars, and here we have a chance to dig it up in half an hour—in less time, too, if we

happen to strike the right spot. Doesn't that thought put any courage or ambition into you?"

Probably it did, for without another word Godfrey seized the shovel that Clarence extended toward him, and hurried away in the direction of the potato-patch.

We need not follow them any farther, for they did not find the hidden treasure that night. It will be enough to say that, following the example Clarence set him, Godfrey did something he had not done before for a number of years—he worked until he raised a copious perspiration; that he kept a bright look out for the eye of fire that had so badly frightened him and Dan the night before; that he and his companion dug a dozen holes in what they supposed to be the most "likely" spots, in each case shovelling back the earth they had thrown out, so that their work might not attract the attention of any of the general's field hands in the morning; that after three hours' hard labor Godfrey handed his shovel to Clarence, who promised to put it back where he had found it; and that the two separated with mutual promises to meet again at the same place and hour on the following evening. Neither of them were disheartened by their failure. On the contrary,

Godfrey was encouraged, for he had learned to his satisfaction that if old Jordan's haunt had really come back there to protect the barrel, he would not appear so long as Clarence Gordon was on the ground. He went home and slept soundly after his unusual exercise, and awoke the next morning feeling that he was nearer to attaining his hopes than he had ever been before.

"Yes, jest a quarter of an aere nearer," said he, "kase what ground we dug up last night, won't never have to be dug up agin. Mr. Clarence is better to have along in sich work as that nor an army of them lazy Dans would be, kase he ain't afeared of nothing, an' pitches in an' does his share. It was jest amazin' how he did fling the dirt outen them holes."

Breakfast being over Godfrey's pipe came into use, and he smoked and meditated during the best part of the forenoon. His family, as usual, were all away, and he had the premises to himself. There was no one to disturb him, and he could build air-castles to his heart's content. In this agreeable occupation he passed the time until eleven o'clock, and was then called back to earth again, by the sound of footsteps coming rapidly along the road. He looked up, and saw that the one who had so rudely aroused him was

his hopeful son Dan, whose whole appearance indicated that he had something marvellous to communicate. One look was enough to satisfy Godfrey of this fact, and his heart fairly came up into his mouth. He began to imagine all sorts of evil things directly ; and being anxious to know the worst at once, he tried hard to speak to Dan, but could not utter a sound to save his life.

Dan lost no time in passing over the fifty yards that lay between him and the cabin. As he threw himself on the bench beside his father, his rifle slipped from his grasp and fell to the ground, and his head moved from side to side as if he had lost all control of it.

“Now, then !” exclaimed Godfrey, finding his tongue at last.

“O, pop !” cried Dan, “it’s come. We did see it that night.”

“What’s come, an’ what night did we see it ?”

“Why, ole Jordan’s haunt,” gasped Dan. “I seed him jest now in broad daylight—I did, as sure’s I’m settin’ on this yere bench tellin’ ye—an’ thar was others seed him too ; an’ thar was that eye of his’n in the middle of his head, an’ it kept a flickerin’

an' a winkin' jest as it done that night in the dark. O, my soul !"

Godfrey hardly knew what to do with himself, so terrified and astounded was he. He took his pipe out of his mouth, jumped up from the bench, and looked all around as if he were trying to make up his mind which way to run first.

"O, it ain't a comin' here," said Dan, who could tell by these movements what his father was thinking about. "It done went into the gen'ral's barn. It's got a hidin'-place in thar."

These words reassured Godfrey, who being satisfied that the terrible apparition was at a safe distance, seated himself on the bench again, and began to question Dan. He hoped that the boy was mistaken, and that his very lively imagination had converted a stump or some other object he had seen in the woods, into what he supposed to be old Jordan's ghost ; but Dan gave his evidence in such a way, and was so very positive on every point on which his father asked information, that Godfrey was obliged to believe that he had seen something wonderful. Perhaps after the reader hears Dan's story he will believe it too. We will follow him, but tell it in our way.

Dan said he had had better luck in the woods that

morning than he usually did—the bunch of squirrels he exhibited, and to which he had held fast during his headlong flight, proved that statement—and having shot all the game he wanted, he was coming home by way of the general's lane. He saw the hostler and two or three other negroes standing in front of the barn, and when he came up he found that they were holding an earnest consultation, and that they were all more or less frightened. Dan at once inquired into the cause of their alarm, and was informed that something very strange and mysterious had just happened. The hostler was busy with his usual duties in the barn, and the others were at work in the field close by, when a queer-looking object suddenly made its appearance among them. It was dressed in a suit of white cottonade, and looked and acted like an old, decrepit negro; but it could not have been that, for if it had been, it would have returned some of the numerous greetings that were addressed to it. Besides, it did not seem to hear or see anything.

It was first discovered by the hostler, and where it came from he couldn't tell. It walked past him, and out at the door toward the place where the men were at work in the field. These—there were three

of them—thought they recognised in it an old friend from whom they had long been separated, and throwing down their hoes they hurried toward the figure, extending their hands and crying out: “How de, Uncle Jordan!” But the figure paid no attention to them, and it finally dawned upon the negroes that it was not Jordan after all, but his spirit, which had come back to visit the scenes with which the faithful slave had been familiar while in the flesh. After that the figure had all the room it wanted. The negroes backed off and watched it as it walked slowly about the barn-yard, and finally disappeared behind one of the corn-cribs. They waited for it to appear again, but as it did not, one of the boldest ventured to draw near and peep around the corner of the crib. There was no one in sight.

This made it evident that the object they had seen was a spirit, and nothing else; for if it had been a human being, it could not have got out from behind the corn-crib without being seen by some of the watchful negroes. The crib joined the barn, and there was no entrance to either of the buildings on that side that could be made available, except the door, and that could be seen through the front doors, which stood wide open. There was a window which

opened into a storeroom in the barn, but it was securely nailed, and had not been opened for a number of years.

The negroes told this extraordinary story in low tones, and rolled the whites of their eyes and trembled and gave other indications that their minds were in a very unsettled state, and that a very small thing would get up a first-class panic among them. As Dan listened the cold chills crept all over him, and his hair seemed to stand on end. What then must have been his terror when one of the negroes suddenly clapped his hands and shrieked :

“ Good Lord a mussy, look down on us poor, miserable niggers ! Dar he is now ! ”

CHAPTER XI.

OLD JORDAN SHOWS HIMSELF.

THIS startling announcement was accompanied by such strange contortions on the part of the negro who made it, that Dan was completely unnerved, and would have taken to his heels in short order, had he not suddenly lost all control over himself. His whole body seemed weighed down with iron. He did, however, manage to turn his head and look in the direction in which his sable companions were gazing, and sure enough, there he was—an old, rheumatic negro, bent half double with age, and dressed in that peculiar costume so common among field negroes before the war. He leaned heavily upon a staff—which, however, he planted firmly, almost viciously on the ground with every step, as if there was plenty of strength left in his old arm—and walked in that indescribable manner which no one ever saw attempted by anybody except a plantation negro.

When first seen he was in the middle of the lane; and how he ever got there without being observed, was a mystery. He was coming toward the barn, and when he arrived opposite to it he turned toward the open doors, and Dan and the terrified negroes backed hastily out of his way. He looked neither to the right nor left, but entered the barn, went the whole length of it, and disappeared through the door at the other end.

“That’s ole Jordan, if I ever seed him,” exclaimed one of the negroes, all of whom turned as white as their black skins would let them.

“No, sar; ’tain’t ole Jordan, nudder—dat ain’t,” said another; “kase ole Jordan, if it was him, wouldn’t go right fru us dat way, widout speakin’ to nobody. Whar’s he gwine now?”

The negro, as he asked this question, started on tiptoe toward the back door, followed by his companions and Dan. Arriving on the spot where the figure had last been seen, they looked in every direction, but could see nothing of it. Gathering a little more courage, they went to the end of the corn-crib and looked around it. There was no one in sight. After that they went around the barn, keeping close together for mutual protection, but old Jordan had

disappeared as completely as though he had never been in existence. Then the negroes began to grow frightened again. The hostler declared that he would never go into that barn again; those who had been at work in the field retreated in great haste toward the house; and Dan, who dared not stay there alone, shouldered his rifle, got over the tall gate somehow, and stepped out for home at his very best pace.

This was the substance of the story Dan told his father, and Godfrey listened to it with open mouth and staring eyes. He knew that ghosts appeared at night—nobody could talk or laugh him out of that belief, for he knew it to be true by his own experience—but he had never before heard that they grew so bold as to show themselves in broad daylight. “This yere beats my time all holler,” said he, as he found his tongue. “I declar’, folks ain’t safe nowhar, an’ at no time, day nor night. Dannie, that thar bar’l is in that tater-patch as sure’s you’re an inch high; kase if it ain’t, what makes ole Jordan’s haunt come back here foolin’ around? He didn’t act as though he wanted to hurt anybody, did he?”

“No, but he had a big club in his hand,” said

Dan, whose frightened optics had magnified an ordinary walking-stick, just as they had cheated their owner into believing that the apparition, or whatever it was, had an eye of fire in the middle of his forehead.

“What sort of a club was it?” asked his father.

“O, a great big one! an’ it was all curled and twisted up like a snake.”

“I’ve seed ole Jordan walkin’ with it a million times,” said Godfrey. “He used it this yere way, didn’t he?” he added, picking up a stick, that happened to be lying near him, and imitating the energetic manner in which the old negro handled his cane.

“That’s jest the way he done,” said Dan.

“An’ he walked this way, didn’t he?” continued Godfrey, bending his back and legs, drawing his head down between his shoulders and mimicking old Jordan’s style of progression.

“Yes; that’s jest the way he walked.”

“Then it’s his haunt, an’ thar ain’t no mistake about it,” said Godfrey, throwing down the stick and pushing back his sleeves. “Jest fetch out my rifle, Dannie.”

“O, pop, what be ye goin’ to do?” gasped Dan.

“I’m goin up thar,” was the reply; and any one who had seen Godfrey when he made it, never would have imagined that only a few short hours before he had been so badly frightened, that he could not run half fast enough to suit him. He looked brave enough to meet a lion single-handed. “I want to see that thing,” he continued, “an’ I want to see it in the daytime, too—not arter dark, as I did afore!”

“Wal, now, I ain’t agoin’ to stay here alone, I bet ye,” whined Dan.

“Then come along with yer pop.”

“No, I won’t.”

“Ye needn’t be afeared; kase I’ve heard tell that them haunts can’t harm nobody in the daytime. Ye see, if it’s ole Jordan’s haunt, his comin’ back here proves that we’ve dug a hole purty clost to that thar bar’l; an’ if Mr.—— Hum! Bring out my we’pon, Dannie.”

Godfrey was about to add that if Mr. Clarence, after hearing of what had just taken place, was not afraid to continue the search for the buried treasure, he (Godfrey) was not afraid either; but remembering that Dan was to be kept in ignorance of the arrangements he had made with the general’s nephew, he checked himself in time, and again desired the boy

to bring out his rifle. Godfrey did not intend to shoot at old Jordan's apparition if he saw it. He only wanted to take the weapon with him because he felt safer while it was in his hands. He loaded it very carefully when his son brought it out, and placing it on his shoulder started off, Dan keeping close by his side.

Godfrey was by no means as much at his ease as he seemed to be, and had it been after sunset, he could not have been hired to venture near the general's lane after what he had heard. He considered that he was about to do a very reckless thing, but he kept resolutely on, and finally reached the barn. The wide doors that gave entrance into the lane stood open, but the building was deserted by all living things save the horses and a few chickens, and an unearthly silence seemed to brood over it. Godfrey dared not enter. He walked up close to the threshold, and stretching out his long neck, peeped into every corner. While he was thus engaged, a smothered exclamation from Dan caused him to straighten up as suddenly as if he had been shot.

"Laws a massy!" cried Dan. "Thar he is agin!"

"O, my soul!" ejaculated Godfrey, shivering all over.

He looked around, and saw the object of his search coming down the lane toward the barn. Just one look was enough for Godfrey, and in that one look he took in everything about the apparition ; for such he believed it to be. He remembered old Jordan so well that he would have recognised him on the instant if he had seen him in Asia. Here he was now before his very eyes. There could be no mistake about it. The peculiar style of progression, the clothes, the manner in which he handled his cane, and the whole appearance of the approaching object, all proclaimed that it could be none other than the missing Jordan. Godfrey did not wait for him to come any nearer. Quickly shouldering his rifle he darted through the barn, out at the back door, and ran for his life, paying no heed to the frantic appeals to "wait a minute," which the terrified Dan shouted after him. He made his way across the general's grounds to the lake, the shore of which he followed until he came to the woods ; and there he sat down on a log to recover his breath, and to wait for Dan.

The latter came at last, and his first act was to take his father to task for deserting him in so cowardly a manner. Godfrey had nothing to say in reply. Forgetting that the boy had been just as anxious

as himself to get safely out of sight of the apparition, he asked a good many questions, hoping to learn what old Jordan had done, where he had gone, and whether or not he had said anything; but on these points Dan could give him no information. The two went home together, and passed the remainder of the day in a state of mind that can hardly be described. When night came Godfrey did not sit on his bench as usual; he stayed in the house, never once giving a thought to Clarence Gordon, who was waiting for him at his uncle's barn. He kept a bright blaze in the fire-place, so that the interior might be lighted up as much as possible. When he got ready to go to bed he took pains to fasten the door securely—and that was a thing he had never been known to do before—and to place his rifle close by the head of the “shake-down,” so that it could be readily seized in case of emergency.

The next morning he ate but little breakfast, and seemed to be greatly relieved when he could sit on the bench with his pipe. He smoked and meditated for two hours (during this time all the members of his family had gone off about their usual vocations—Mrs. Evans to work at the house of a neighbor, David to the fields to continue the education of the

pointer, and Dan to the woods, to spend the day in shooting squirrels and making a pretence of building turkey-traps)—and was then aroused by the appearance of Clarence Gordon, who was the very person he most wished to see. The boy carried his rifle in the hollow of his arm, and, as before, stopped near the cabin to bring a squirrel out of one of the tall trees growing by the roadside. Godfrey hastened to meet him, and was greeted with :

“ You’re a nice fellow to keep a promise, are you not ? ”

“ Mr. Clarence, have they heard of it up to the Gordons ? ” asked Godfrey, almost in a whisper.

“ There’s an awful row up there among the negroes about a ghost, or some such nonsense, if that’s what you mean,” answered Clarence. “ There isn’t a black man or woman on the plantation that can be hired to go near the barn, and my uncle is afraid all his hands are going to leave him to gather his crops as best he can. But, of course, that wasn’t what kept you away last night.”

“ I reckon it was jest that very thing,” said Godfrey.

“ Then you’re a coward and ought to be heartily ashamed of yourself. . That’s my opinion of *you* ! ”

Godfrey jumped up and knocked his heels together, coming down with his feet spread out and his fists doubled up, as he always did when he was angry and about to say something very emphatic. But when he had done this much he stopped short, for he saw that he had not frightened the boy in the least. He had only surprised him. Clarence had never before seen a backwoods fighter limber up his joints previous to going into action.

"Well, what do you mean by that?" he asked, coolly.

Godfrey did not think it best to say that he had been getting ready to punish the boy for calling him a coward, so he replied :

"If you had seed it yourself, Mr. Clarence, what would you say?"

"Do you mean that thing you call a haunt? I never saw one, and there are none."

"I know better; kase thar is," said Godfrey, earnestly. "I seed it myself with my own two eyes in broad daylight, an' so did Dannie an' three or four of the gen'ral's niggers."

"Well, it is very strange that no one else could see it," said Clarence. "My aunt wanted to take Marsh and me out riding yesterday afternoon, but

the hostler wouldn't hitch up because he was afraid to go near the barn ; so uncle, and Don, and Bert, and I went out there and searched high and low for the thing that had frightened him, and could find nothing."

"In course you couldn't, kase it's a haunt. Nobody can't see 'em, 'ceptin' when they wants to be seed."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Clarence. "I didn't suppose there was a man in this day and age of the world who would talk as you do. Did you see any thing yesterday?"

"Yes, sar, I did."

"You saw it *yourself*, did you?"

"Yes, I done seed it my own self."

"What did it look like?"

"It looked jest as ole Jordan did the last time I seed him, afore he run away with the Yanks."

"Then you can safely bet it *was* he—not his 'haunt,' as you call it, but he, himself, in his own proper person. If you had taken hold of him you would have found solid bone and muscle in your hands."

"No, I wouldn't," said Godfrey, solemnly. "I had my rifle in my hands, an' if I had drawed a bead

on him, the bullet would have gone through him as slick as grease, an' never hurt him."

Clarence stamped his foot impatiently. "It is well you didn't try it," said he. "If you had, you would now be in jail with a good chance of being tried for a very serious offence."

"Do you reckon it was ole Jordan hisself?" asked Godfrey, who seemed to be impressed by the boy's arguments.

"I know it was," said Clarence.

"We all thought he was dead."

"Well, it's no uncommon thing for people to be mistaken, is it? If he were dead how could he come back here?"

"What do you reckon he's come back for?"

"You tell?"

"An' if it was him, his own self, what was the reason he didn't speak to nobody? He knowed two of the niggers that was thar, an' he knowed me. 'Tain't likely he'd 'member Dannie, kase the boy was too leetle when he went away."

"Answer the question yourself," replied Clarence.

"You are as good at guessing as I am."

"Wal, if it's him, his own self, I wish he hadn't come back," said Godfrey.

"I don't, for I intend to make use of him. The old fellow is not above earning a dime or two, is he?"

"I never yet seed the man that was, black or white," said Godfrey.

"Then I shall make it my business to scrape an acquaintance with the old fellow, if I can find him, and ask him if he'd like to make a thousand dollars. He'll say 'yes,' of course; and then I'll tell him that all he has got to do to have the money paid right over to him, is to show me where he hid that barrel before he ran away with the Yankees."

Godfrey backed toward the bench and looked at Clarence without speaking.

"If he will do it—and I know I should if I were in his place—I shall be glad he has come back," continued Clarence. "I took a good look at that potato-patch yesterday, and I tell you there's a lot of ground in it. It will take us till doomsday to dig it full of holes four or five feet deep, and I can't wait so long. I need the money now—to-day!"

Godfrey looked at Clarence from head to foot, taking in at a glance all the fashionable and expensive trappings he had about him, both useful and ornamental, and wondered why he should be so much in need of money. If he had possessed the cash

value of the boy's gold watch and chain he would have been very well contented, and would have thought no more about the barrel and its contents while he had ten dollars of it remaining.

"Now, don't you suppose that if you were to hang around uncle's barn for a while, you could gain an interview with old Jordan?" asked Clarence.

"No, sar," answered Godfrey, hastily. "I wouldn't see him again fur no money. An' right here's one thing that mebbe ye didn't think of: Wouldn't he be an ole fule to go an' show ye whar that thar bar'l is, an' get only a thousand dollars fur it, when he could go and dig it up by hisself an' take it all—the hul eighty thousand?"

"I have thought of that," said Clarence, "and have made up my mind what I shall do in case he refuses to help me. Mark my words: If I get my hands on that old nigger, I'll find out where that barrel is, if he knows."

This was all Clarence would say on this point just then. His companion tried hard to make him explain himself, but all Clarence would say was, that he had a way of finding out things he wanted to know, and with that Godfrey was obliged to be content. Before separating they made another agreement,

which was that they would meet that night, as soon as it was fairly dark, at the summer-house on the shore of the lake. Godfrey appointed the place of meeting himself, saying that he would not go near the general's barn again if he had an army at his back. He promised, moreover, to meet Clarence there every night, and to faithfully assist him in prosecuting the search until the barrel was found. If Clarence succeeded in obtaining an interview with the old negro and finding out where the eighty thousand dollars were hidden, so much the better; but that was a matter with which Godfrey himself would have nothing to do.

That was another long day to Godfrey. When he had leisure to calmly think over the promise he had made, he wondered how he had dared do it; and as the afternoon waned and the hour appointed for the meeting at the summer-house drew nearer, he became really alarmed, and was several times on the point of making up his mind that he would stay at home. But he did not stay at home. He went, agreeably to promise, and for half an hour sat in the summer-house starting at the rustle of every leaf and holding himself in readiness to take to his heels at the first sight of anything that might look like old Jordan's

white coat. When at last Clarence arrived, he was so overjoyed to see him, that he seized his hand and shook it until the boy forcibly withdrew it from his grasp.

"I couldn't get away any sooner," said Clarence. "We were having some music up there."

"Did they say anything about the haunt?" asked Godfrey.

"No, they didn't say anything about that, for they have sense enough to know that there is no such thing in the world," said Clarence, impatiently. "They talked about old Jordan, and uncle seems to think he has come back; but he says it is very strange that the old fellow doesn't show himself about the house."

"Say, Mr. Clarence," said Godfrey, suddenly; "mebbe he's come back on purpose to dig up the bar'l hisself!"

"I thought of that," replied the boy. "But if that was his object, he wouldn't be so foolish as to show himself to anybody. He has kept out of my way so far. Don and I have been about the barn all the afternoon watching for him. If I once get my eyes on him I'll see what he's made of, unless he shows that he can run faster than I can."

“What does Mr. Don think about it?”

“O, he’s like the rest. He don’t know what to think about it.”

“Did he ever say anything to ye about the bar’l?”

“Yes; he said just enough to make me think that the barrel is there. I pumped him to-day, and he said in so many words that Jordan hid a barrel of stuff somewhere, and hinted that none of the family ever dug it up. I heard enough to make me determined to go ahead, even if I have to dig up the whole of that potato-patch by myself. If you are ready we’ll go. I have placed a couple of shovels where I can find them.”

So saying Clarence led the way toward the potato-patch, and Godfrey tremblingly followed. The shovels were found, and the two, after walking a short distance along the fence that separated the garden from the potato-patch, were about to climb over into the field where their operations were to be conducted, when Godfrey suddenly laid his hand on his companion’s arm.

“Laws a massy! What’s that, Mr. Clarence?” said he, in a suppressed whisper.

“What’s what?” demanded the boy, who, in spite

of his boasted courage, shivered as if he had been unexpectedly plunged into a bath of ice-water.

“Hark a minute!” said Godfrey. “Don’t ye hear it now?”

Clarence held his breath and listened intently.

CHAPTER XII.

OLD JORDAN IN TROUBLE.

I DO hear it," said Clarence, as soon as he caught the sound that had attracted Godfrey's attention. "There's some one digging out there in the field."

"That's jest what it is," said Godfrey, in a trembling voice. "Don't let's go no further, Mr. Clarence."

"What's the use of being afraid?" returned the boy. "It is a man, of course, for if it were anything else it couldn't use a shovel. You are not afraid of a man, are you?"

No, there was no man in that part of the country that Godfrey was afraid to meet on equal terms; and to prove it he laid down his shovel, clenched his hands and jumped up and knocked his heels together.

"I don't know what you mean by that nonsense," said Clarence, impatiently. "If you are afraid, go home; if you are not, come along with me!"

As the boy said this he placed his hands on the

top rail of the fence and vaulted lightly over it, closely followed by Godfrey, who touched the ground on the opposite side almost as soon as Clarence did. Side by side they moved cautiously in the direction from which the sound of the digging came, and after advancing a short distance, Godfrey threw himself flat on his face to make some investigations. The night being very dark, of course all objects on the ground were invisible to them ; but by placing themselves in such a position that they would have the lighter sky for a background, any object they wished to examine was rendered quite distinct to their gaze. This they both proceeded to do, Clarence following Godfrey's example, and when they arose to their feet again a few seconds later and compared notes, they found that both had arrived at the same conclusion—that there was a man in the field but a few rods away from them, and that he was digging a hole with a shovel. He had gone down so deep already that his legs as far as his knees were concealed, and that proved that he had not come there to steal potatoes. Was he looking for the barrel ? If so, who was he, and how did he find out that there was any barrel there ?

“ Come on,” whispered Clarence, as these thoughts

passed through his mind. "We'll soon know all about it. Be careful not to make the least noise. If he starts to run go after him and bring him back. We must find out who he is, and what he means by this business."

Guided by the strokes of the shovel, which fell upon their ears at regular intervals, Clarence and his companion slowly and cautiously drew nearer to the workman, who, greatly to their surprise, never paid the least attention to their approach. He must have heard the squeaking of Clarence's boots—they would squeak, no matter how carefully he stepped—and the rustle of the dry grass and vines that covered the potato-hills, but he was not frightened from his work. Finally Clarence was near enough to him to lay hold of his arm. Even then the man never looked up or ceased his work, and Clarence began to feel as he had never felt before. His heart beat rapidly and all his strength seemed to be leaving him, but he managed to say, in a very steady voice :

"Look here, young fellow, this sort of game won't work with us, you know. Come up out of that hole and let's see who you are."

"O, my soul!" exclaimed Godfrey, who had stooped down to obtain a peep at the man's face.

“Turn him loose, Mr. Clarence ! That’s ole Jordan’s haunt ! I’d know that ole white coat anywhar. O, my sakes alive !”

“Come back here !” said Clarence, in much the same tone that he would have used had he been addressing a disobedient hound. “Don’t you dare run away, unless you want General Gordon to know all about this.”

These words were spoken just in time. In a moment more Godfrey would have been scudding across the field at the top of his speed. Tremblingly he approached Clarence, and had there been light enough to enable him to distinguish his features, the boy would have seen that they were as white as a sheet.

“You gave me to understand that you are not afraid of any man in the country,” continued the latter. “Now prove it. Reach out your hand and take hold of this fellow’s arm ; and if you don’t feel solid flesh in your grasp, you may take yourself off as soon as you please !”

“Is it a man ?” gasped Godfrey.

“Of course it is. Come here and see for yourself.”

“Why don’t he say somethin’, then ?”

“I suppose it is because he don’t want to. Come here and take hold of him, and we’ll soon find means to make him use his tongue, if he has one !”

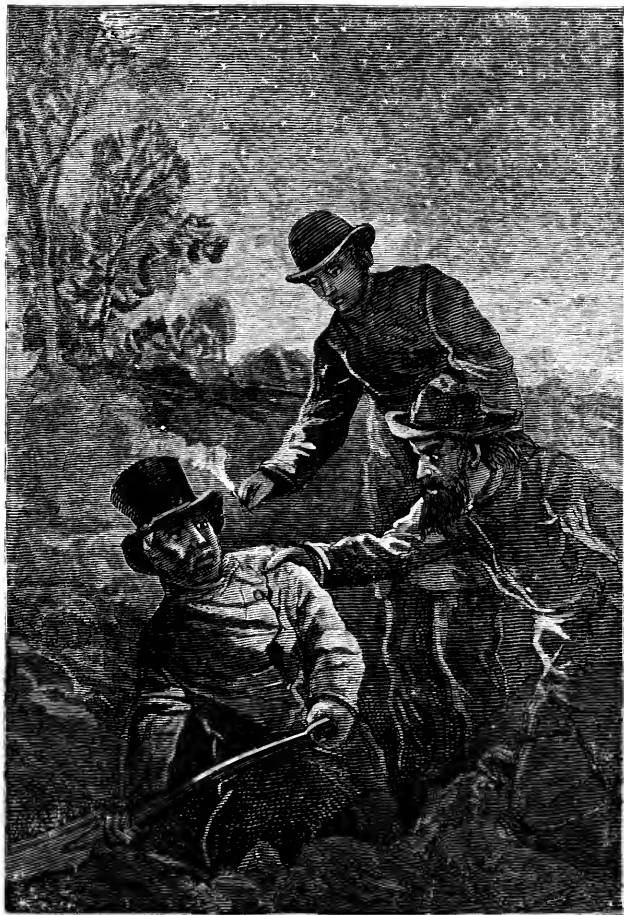
Very reluctantly Godfrey obeyed the command. He extended his hand and made a grasp at the prisoner’s arm, fully expecting that his fingers would pass through it as they would pass through the air ; but to his surprise and intense relief his grasp closed upon a small but very compact bunch of muscle. He seized it firmly and held fast to it, and then his courage all returned, and he was as brave as Clarence himself.

“Now,” said the latter, “I want to take a good look at this fellow.”

Striking a match on the sleeve of his coat as he spoke, he examined the man by the aid of the light it threw out, and saw that he was a coal-black negro, and that he was dressed in a suit of something that had once been white, but which was patched with so many different kinds of cloth that it was hard to find any of the original material in it.

“Are you old Jordan ?” he demanded.

There was no answer returned by the negro, who was as passive in the hands of his captors as if he had been a lump of clay.



THE CAPTURE OF "OLE JORDAN."

"This won't do, old fellow," said Clarence, angrily. "You can't play off on us in this way. You had better open your mouth, or we'll take you straight to the general. Perhaps he can find means to make you tell what you are doing in his potato-patch at this time of night."

"O, that ain't no way to talk to a nigger, Mr. Clarence," said Godfrey. "I knows who he is, an' I can soon make him speak," he added, drawing back his shovel preparatory to punching old Jordan in the ribs with it.

"Hol' on dar, boss!" cried the prisoner.

"Thar, now, what did I tell ye?" exclaimed Godfrey, triumphantly. "Don't sound much like ole Jordan's voice, though!"

"Now that you have found your tongue, I want to talk to you," said Clarence. "Would you like to make a thousand dollars?"

"O, I'm goin' to make a heap more'n dat, boss," replied the negro.

"You are? How are you going to do it?"

"Jordan," said Godfrey, "did you come back to dig up that thar bar'l you kivered up here in this tater-patch on the day the Yanks cut the levee?"

"Dat's tellin'," replied the negro.

"Do you know where the barrel is?" asked Clarence.

"Course he does," exclaimed Godfrey, "kase he's the one that kivered it up. Whar is it, Jordan? Pint out the spot, an' ye shall go free without no harm bein' done to ye; but if ye don't tell——"

"Hol' on dar, boss!" cried the old negro, as Godfrey once more drew back his spade.

"Do you know where the barrel is?" asked Clarence. "Answer that question!"

"I reckon I does, boss!"

"Well, where is it?"

"O, I didn't say I'd tell dat, did I? It 'longs to my ole marse, Gen'ral Gordon."

"He's got more'n his share already," said Godfrey.

"Den I reckon I'se got jest as much right to dat bar'l an' what's into it, as anybody," said the negro; "mebbe more, kase I'se the one that hid it!"

"Hold on a minute, Godfrey," said Clarence, as his companion raised the shovel threateningly. "Step this way, a moment. Old man, you stay right where you are. If you make any attempt to run, I'll throw this shovel at you!"

Clarence and Godfrey drew off on one side, just

out of ear-shot of the negro, and the former said, in a suppressed whisper :

“Are you sure that’s old Jordan?”

“Just as sure as I can be,” replied Godfrey. “’Tain’t his haunt—I can see that now—but ole Jordan his own self.”

“I am glad you are so positive, for there is something about this business that doesn’t look just right to me. If it is he, he has come back to dig up that barrel himself. I wonder if it is somewhere about the spot where he was digging! How are we going to make him tell?”

“Lick it outen him,” suggested Godfrey.

“O, that would never do in the world. He’d raise the neighborhood with his howling.”

“Wal, mebbe goin’ without grub an’ water fur a few hours will loosen up his tongue.”

“That’s the idea,” said Clarence, joyfully. “No one will miss him, for those who have seen him since he came back think he is a ghost. Where can we take him and keep him safe until he tells us what we want to know?”

“I reckon my tater-hole is as good a place as any,” said Godfrey, after thinking a moment. “I

don't have nothing to put in it now, an' nobody ever goes nigh it."

"Can we lock him up there?"

"No, but we can tie him up, an' that will do jest as well. Howsomever, I don't much keer to go into any sich business as that, Mr. Clarence. S'pose it should come out on us?"

"How in the world is it going to come out on us?" asked Clarence, impatiently. "You'll not tell, will you?"

"No, sar," answered Godfrey, with great emphasis. "I couldn't live here if I did."

"Well, I shall not tell, either. You may be sure of that; so I don't see how it can become known. We can starve old Jordan into opening his mouth, and when he gets ready to tell us where the barrel is, we'll dig it up, divide the contents, and the first boat that comes along will take me away from here. I don't care whether I go up or down the river, so long as I have my pockets full of money."

"An' what'll I do?" asked Godfrey.

"You can do as you please. You want to stay here and spend your share, don't you?"

"But what'll I do with the nigger?"

"I don't care what you do with him," was the

boy's mental reply. "So long as I get safely away from here, you and the nigger can settle the business between you in any way you see fit. That is a matter in which I am not interested." But aloud he said: "O, we'll get rid of him somehow. We'll think about that when the time comes. Now, we'll give old Jordan one more chance to earn his freedom, and if he doesn't see fit to improve it, it is no fault of ours. He will have to go to the potato-hole and be tied up there."

Godfrey was not at all pleased with this arrangement, and he wondered why he had been foolish enough to suggest it. As much as he wanted to be rich, he would never have dared, had he been left to himself, to resort to such desperate measures as these to gain his object. The thought of it was enough to make him tremble. He wished he had never seen Clarence, or had anything to do with him. The boy was so determined to go through with what he had begun, and seemed to be so utterly reckless of consequences, that Godfrey was really afraid of him.

"Say, Mr. Clarence," said he, suddenly, "I 'most done forgot it, but it's the gospel truth, an' I hope I may be shot if it hain't, that that tater-hole of mine has done fell in, an' ain't no more account fur tyin' up niggers in. 'Sides, I hain't got no ropes of no kind."

"All right, Godfrey," said Clarence, who saw very plainly what his companion was trying to get at. "We will find out about that when we get there. But let me tell you one thing: If you think you are going to back out and leave me in the lurch, you are very much mistaken. If you will stick to me and do as I say, we shall both of us come out all right; but if you desert me, there'll be a breeze raised here in this neighborhood that will make you think that war times have come back, sure enough. Now, Jordan," he added, addressing the negro, "will you tell me where that barrel is?"

"No, sar!—no, *sar*!" said the old man, shaking his head most decidedly. "Nobody gets dat bar'l an' what's into it 'ceptin' ole Jordan!"

"All right. Come with us, and we will see if we can find means to make you think differently."

Clarence seized the old negro by one arm, as he spoke, Godfrey at a sign from him took hold of the other, and together they led him across the field until they reached the road, down which they conducted him toward Godfrey's cabin. But little was said during the walk. The negro, who was evidently becoming alarmed, would have talked fast enough, but when his captors allowed him to use his tongue,

he pitched his voice in so high a key that Clarence, alarmed lest he should arouse somebody, sternly ordered him to hold his peace. The old negro changed his tactics now, and most solemnly declared that he didn't know anything about any barrel; that his name was not Jordan; and that he had gone into the field simply for the purpose of stealing some potatoes for his breakfast. But Clarence only laughed at this, and assured him that he was not taking the right course to gain his liberty. Potatoes didn't grow three feet under ground, he said, and neither did prowlers, as a general thing, dig them with a shovel. They could do better work with their hands. If he would go back there and show them where the barrel was hidden, they would dig for it, and the moment they found it they would give him something for pocket-money, and release him. This the old negro protested he could not do, and Clarence assured him that he should do it before he saw daylight again.

Half an hour's walk brought them within sight of the cabin, and there Godfrey left Clarence and the prisoner while he went forward to make sure that none of his family were stirring, and to secure a plow-line that hung up under the shed beside the

corn-crib, that being the article with which he had decided to confine old Jordan. He returned in a few minutes, and once more taking hold of the negro's arm, he and Clarence assisted him over two or three fences, through a thick brier-patch which covered the site of his former comfortable dwelling, and finally halted in front of the potato-hole. It was simply an out-door cellar, the peak of the roof rising to the height of one's shoulder, and the caves resting on the ground. The cellar was quite deep enough to permit a tall man to stand upright in it, as Clarence found when he descended the stairs that led into it. It had successfully resisted the ravages of time, and with the exception of the steps, which were in a very dilapidated state, was as sound as it was on the day it was built. The roof was four feet thick, and Godfrey assured his companion that the prisoner might shout for help as long and as loudly as he pleased, but he could not make himself heard as far as the cabin, unless he possessed lungs with as much power as a steam-whistle.

Clarence now renewed his efforts to induce the negro to tell where the barrel with the eighty thousand dollars in it was hidden ; but the latter declared that he did not know ; and Clarence, losing all

patience, assisted Godfrey in tying him fast to one of the stanchions that supported the roof. When this was done he felt his way out of the cellar—it was as dark as Egypt in there—and Godfrey closed and latched the door behind him. They both breathed easier when the work was over.

“Well, Godfrey,” said Clarence, “your potato-hole seems to be in pretty good condition yet; and you did manage to find something to tie the old nigger with after all, didn’t you? Now remember that it will not be safe for us to go near him during the daytime; some one might see us. We must give this cellar a wide berth for twenty-four hours. If the old fellow goes that length of time without anything to eat or drink, perhaps he will begin to think that we are in earnest.”

Godfrey made no reply. His heart was not in the business, and he wished himself safely out of it. Having gone so far, however, there was no way of retreat. If old Jordan were released, he would be certain to tell of the treatment he had received, and that would bring him and Clarence into serious trouble. He scarcely heard his companion’s cheerful good-night, so engrossed was he with his own gloomy thoughts.

Having taken leave of Godfrey, Clarence walked rapidly toward his uncle's house, little dreaming what a commotion the events of this night were destined to create there. He was not nearly so light-hearted as he pretended to be. Now that he had time to think calmly about what he had done, he was frightened, and wondered how he had ever had the hardihood to engage in so reckless a piece of business. "No matter," said he, trying his best to banish all his dismal forebodings, "twenty-four hours in that cellar will bring the old nigger to his senses; and when I once get my hands on the money in that barrel, I'll bid good-by to America for a while. Forty thousand dollars! Whew! This is the only chance I shall ever have to make a fortune, and I am determined to improve it."

Arriving at his uncle's house at last, he stopped for a few minutes to compose himself and calm the excitement which he knew must be plainly visible in his face, and then with all the nonchalance of which he was master, he opened the door and went in. He stopped in the hall to hang up his cap, and would have given anything he possessed, if he could have found some plausible excuse for going at once to his room. There was a merry family gathering in the

back parlor, and he did not want to go in there. Some one was playing on the piano, and the rest were engaged in most agreeable conversation, if one might judge by the peals of laughter that now and then rang through the house. Clarence was hardly fit to go among them, he told himself as he glanced at the little mirror in the hat-rack. His hair was disheveled, his face flushed, and his boots and clothes were covered with dust. While he was making some hasty improvements in his appearance, his Aunt Mary came into the hall. She had heard him enter and came out to meet him.

“Come in here, truant, and give an account of yourself,” said she, pleasantly. “What do you mean by deserting us every night in this unceremonious manner? Clarence,” said she, shaking her finger at him, and sinking her voice almost to a whisper, “you’ve been smoking again!”

“I know it,” said the boy.

“Do you find a cigar so much more agreeable than the society of your friends?”

“No, ma’am; but I have been in the habit of it so long, you know; and it is hard to give it up.”

“I suppose it is; but persevere and remember that ‘he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that

take a city.' Where's Don? I thought he was with you!"

"I am sure I don't know. I haven't seen him since supper."

"Why that is very strange," said Mrs. Gordon. "He has been out for the last two or three nights until nine or ten o'clock, and I don't know what to think about it. Come in, now. Lucy has been waiting to practise the Sharpshooter's Waltz with you."

Much against his will Clarence was led into the parlor, and the curious glances which all his relatives directed toward him as he entered made him feel very uncomfortable. His uncle thought he acted ill at ease; Bert's mental comment was that he had been running a race with somebody; and Marshall told himself that he must have been rolled in a dust heap. Clarence could tell by the expression on their faces pretty nearly what they were thinking about, and it was with great effort that he aroused himself sufficiently to take any interest in what was going on. He played several tunes on his flute while his cousin Lucy accompanied him on the piano, and as soon as he could do so with any show of reason, he bade the company good-night and went to bed.

“I’d like to know where in the world you have spent your evenings since you have been here,” said Marshall, when he joined him in his room half an hour later. “Just as soon as it grows dark you’re off, and that’s the last we see of you until ten o’clock. Have you found a billiard saloon anywhere?”

“Perhaps you had better watch me, if you are so very anxious to find out where I go,” growled Clarence, in reply. “I am bored to death with this everlasting music, and it is a great pity if I can’t now and then take a quiet stroll and a cigar without exciting astonishment and setting the whole family to questioning me.”

Clarence slept but little that night, for his mind was in a very unsettled state; and a dread of impending evil, which he could not shake off, continually haunted him. The first words he exchanged with the first person he met the next morning, gave him new cause for alarm. That person was Bert, whom he encountered just as he stepped into the hall. His cousin’s face was very pale, and Clarence saw that he carried his whip in his hand and was dressed for a ride.

“O, Clarence!” cried Bert. “What do you think has become of Don?”

Clarence could only look the surprise which this abrupt question occasioned him. At the same time he felt a sinking at his heart for which he could not account.

"He wasn't at home at all last night," continued Bert. "We've made inquiries everywhere, and the last person who saw him was the hostler, who says that Don went into the barn about eight o'clock, but he didn't see him come out again. Father and I are just about to start off to look for him!"

Clarence was too amazed to speak. He hurried out of the house and to the barn, where he found his uncle in the act of mounting his horse. There were two other persons in the barn—the hostler and Godfrey Evans. The hostler was putting the saddle on Bert's pony, and Godfrey stood around looking the very picture of misery. He brightened up when he saw Clarence approaching.

"Now, Godfrey," said the general, "will you do that much for me?"

"Yes, sar, an' I'll start now," answered Godfrey, who made a few rapid steps toward the gate, and then suddenly stopped, faced about and came back again.

"You know the woods like a book," continued the

general, "and if Don is lost, you will be more likely to find him than anybody else. Good-morning, Clarence! I don't suppose you can tell me anything about Don, can you?"

"No, sir, I am sorry to say I cannot," replied Clarence, who felt that sinking at his heart again when he looked at Godfrey.

"He has lately fallen into the habit of roaming about of nights," said the general, "and I don't know how to account for it. The boy is large enough to take care of himself, but I don't think he would stay away so long unless he were in trouble. I am going down the road to see if I can get any tidings of him; Bert is going out into the country; Godfrey has promised to search the woods; and if you feel like it, you might jump on Don's pony and ride down the river road a few miles. Everybody down there knows Don, and if he went that way before dark last night, some one must have seen him."

Clarence replied that he would willingly do all in his power to find the missing boy, and then Bert and his father mounted their horses and galloped out of the gate. Godfrey slunk away behind the corn-crib, and Clarence, after telling the hostler to put a saddle on Don's pony, followed him. He found

Godfrey sitting on the ground and rocking himself back and forth as if he were in great pain.

“What’s the matter with you?” demanded Clarence, and it was only by a great effort of will that he could bring himself to speak at all.

“O, my soul!” cried Godfrey. “Does yer know what we’ve been an’ done?”

“Do I know what we’ve done?” repeated the boy. “What do you mean? Speak out!”

“O, my soul, how can I?” moaned Godfrey. “Thar’s the gen’ral axin’ me would I s’arch the woods to find that lost boy of his’n, an’ thar he is, this blessed minute, tied up hard an’ fast in my own tater-hole. O, laws! O, laws!”

Clarence reeled and fell heavily against the corncrib, as if some one had unexpectedly dealt him a stunning blow.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW CLARENCE FOUND IT OUT.

CLARENCE and his brother had not been under their uncle's roof more than two or three hours before they found that they had been sadly mistaken in regard to some opinions they had formed, and Marshall was honest enough to acknowledge the fact, at least to himself. The "country bumpkins," as Clarence had sneeringly called his cousins, proved to be educated young gentlemen, who, before the day was over, put their dashing city relatives to the blush on more than one occasion, and forced them to confess that all the knowledge in the world was not to be gained by simply travelling about Europe. Don and Bert exerted themselves to the utmost to entertain their visitors, and so did all the other members of the family; and they succeeded so well that Marshall told himself that perhaps his forced sojourn in the country would not turn out to be so very unpleasant after all. But Clarence, being entirely out of

his element, was homesick already, and consequently could take no interest in anything. He cared little for such amusements and pastimes as were to be found in a happy cultivated family circle. He preferred a game of billiards or cards with some boon companions, and these he could not have so long as he remained under his uncle's roof.

The day was a long and dreary one to him. He played a few times on his flute while his cousin Lucy accompanied him on the piano; spent an hour or two in walking about the plantation; listened patiently, but without much interest, while Don and Bert talked of the various exciting and amusing incidents that had happened in the neighborhood during the war; and as soon as night came and he could find an opportunity to do so, he slipped away by himself. He wanted to be alone, so that he could think over the plans he had formed for bringing his visit to a speedy termination, and make up his mind what sort of a letter he would write to his mother.

"There's no fun to be seen here," said Clarence, as he drew a cigar from one pocket and a match-saf from another. "I can see that with half an eye, and I can't endure the thought of staying here for six long months. I'd do almost anything to raise

money enough to take me away from here this very night. Now, what can I say to mother, in the letter I intend to write to her before I go to bed, that will induce her to send me fifty dollars without an hour's delay?"

As Clarence asked himself this question he lighted his cigar, and finding that a fence ran across his path, and that he was at such a distance from the house that he could enjoy his smoke without fear of interruption, he leaned on the top rail and went off into a reverie, from which he was aroused a few minutes later by the sound of voices and footsteps. Hastily taking his cigar from his mouth and putting it behind him, he looked up and saw a couple of figures advancing toward him along the fence. It was so dark that he could not see who they were, but it flashed upon him that perhaps they were Don and Bert, who were out searching for him. With an exclamation indicative of great annoyance and vexation, he was about to throw away his cigar, when some words spoken in a suppressed tone of voice fell upon his ear and arrested his hand.

By this time the approaching figures were so close to him that Clarence made out that they were a man and a boy; and from their conversation he learned

that they had come there to dig up a barrel. Clarence caught every word they uttered, and could scarcely restrain his astonishment when he heard the man say :

“He done a good thing fur us, ole Jordan did, when he run away without tellin’ his missus whar that bar’l was hid. Now, Dannie, let’s try right here fust. Ye begin, kase yer the youngest, an’ I’ll set down an’ smoke an’ watch ye till yer tired. Now, bar in mind that yer workin’ fur eighty thousand dollars ! Throw it out with the fust shovelful, an’ I’ll give ye half !”

Clarence almost jumped from the ground when he heard this, and, like the quick-witted fellow he was, he comprehended the situation perfectly ; but we ought to say that he had something besides the conversation to which he had just listened, to aid him in reaching the conclusions he so suddenly formed. During the day his aunt had shown him several articles of value that had long been heir-looms in the Gordon family, and explained to him how she had managed to keep them secreted during the war. The family silver had been buried again and again—every time, in fact, that there was the least rumor of an advance being made by either army—and the

work, for the most part, had been done some of the negroes on the plantation.

“A good many people lost property in that way which they never recovered,” said his aunt. “The negroes, having concealed it, ran away with the Federals without leaving any clue to the hiding-place of the valuables, and so they were never found.”

Clarence had not thought much of this at the time, but he thought of it now, and by connecting it with the words that had just been uttered in his hearing, he arrived at a tolerably fair solution of what would otherwise have been a deep mystery to him. His aunt had not said so in so many words, but he inferred that she had lost valuable property in the way she had explained. Clarence was sure of it now, and he was almost overwhelmed by the discovery he had made.

“Eighty thousand dollars!” said he, to himself. “It must be in money, and in gold and silver, too, for my aunt says that all the wealthy rebels took the precaution to exchange their bank-notes for specie at the first beginning of the trouble between the North and South. I hope to goodness they will find it. If they do, they can rest assured that they’ll not get away with it all.”

The few seconds that Clarence passed in meditat-

ing and soliloquizing in this way, were employed by Dan in getting ready for work, and by Godfrey in picking out a comfortable place to sit down, and in filling and lighting his pipe. Having discarded his coat and hat, Dan threw out two or three shovelfuls of earth ; but it was heavy work, and Dan, who got tired very easily, could not help asking himself how many such shovelfuls he would have to throw out before the coveted barrel could be brought to light. He told his father that ten acres was a great deal of ground, and Godfrey, to encourage him, reminded him that there were eighty thousand dollars in gold and silver buried somewhere about there, and that they must have it if they were obliged to dig up the whole state of Mississippi.

It was while Dan was looking all about the field to see how large it was, that he discovered the lighted end of Clarence Gordon's cigar shining through the darkness. Clarence was leaning half way over the fence in his eagerness to hear all that was said, and smoking furiously, too much interested and excited to remember that the little coal of fire on the end of his Havana, which glowed brightly for a moment and then faded almost entirely away, as he drew in and puffed out the smoke, could be seen by the par-

ties he was watching, should either of them chance to look that way. We know that they did look that way, both of them, and that half a minute later the field was deserted, and Clarence was standing alone beside the fence.

The boy was utterly amazed at the haste with which Godfrey and his son took themselves out of sight, and all unconscious of the fact that he was the cause of their alarm, he drew himself quickly down beside a tree that stood in the fence corner, put his cigar behind him and looked all around, expecting to see some member of his uncle's family or one of his servants approaching. But there was no one in sight, and after listening and watching for a few minutes, Clarence climbed over into the field to see what progress the two prowlers had made with their work.

The hope that they might have uncovered the barrel was very short-lived, for he found that Dan had made just no headway at all. The hole he had dug could have been covered up with a hat.

"I wonder what in the world it was that frightened them away," said Clarence, in deep perplexity. "They were frightened, of course, or they would not have run as they did after holding that whispered

consultation. I can't see or hear anything alarming, and I do wish they had stayed long enough to dig up the barrel. Eighty thousand dollars! If it is to be found I must have some of it. If I knew where I could find a shovel, I'd dig awhile myself. But no matter. They will probably come back again; if not to-night then some other night, and I shall be on hand when the barrel is found, no matter if I don't get a wink of sleep for the next six months. Hello! what's this?" he added, as his fingers came in contact with the pipe Godfrey had dropped.

He held it up between him and the sky, and when he saw what it was, was about to throw it away, when he thought of something. He held the pipe suspended in the air a moment, then put it into his pocket and walked back to his hiding-place again. He waited and watched there for nearly an hour, hoping that Godfrey and his son would return, but being satisfied at last that they had no intention of coming back that night, and fearing that if he remained away from the house any longer, somebody would be out to see what had become of him, he pitched the stump of his cigar into the bushes and walked away from the fence.

"Now, this is just what I am going to do," said

Clarence, who had already thought the matter over and determined upon his course of action. "I'm going to find out who those fellows are, if there is any possible way for me to do it, and I am going to say to them: 'Look here, boys; havers!' If they say 'Yes,' well and good. If they say 'No,' I'd like to see them get a cent out of those eighty thousand dollars. I wish it was morning. I shan't sleep a wink to-night."

The first person he met as he entered the hall was his aunt, who seemed to be waiting for him. She asked him where he had been passing the evening, and detecting the smell of tobacco smoke, told him what he had been doing. Clarence pleaded guilty, but said that he was homesick and had the blues; and when he got that way, nothing did him so much good as a lonely walk and a cigar. But he would give up the cigar now. He would not smoke any more.

After a short time spent with the family in music and conversation, the boys all went up stairs together, and Don and Bert stopped for a few minutes in their cousins' room. Clarence thought this a good opportunity to find out some things he wanted to know, so he began questioning Don at once.

“Whom do you visit with here?” said he. “Who is your nearest neighbor?”

“O, we have a large circle of friends,” replied Don. “I don’t wonder you think it very lonely now; but wait until you have had a chance to make acquaintances, and then tell me what you think about it. Our nearest neighbor, as you go up the river, is Colonel Packard. He has two lively boys whom I think you will like. In fact I don’t see how you could help it, for everybody likes them. Our nearest neighbor, as you go down the river, is Godfrey Evans.”

“He’s a good one,” said Bert.

“We don’t have much to do with him or his family,” continued Don, “and you will know the reason why when you see them. We give David our dogs to break, because he is a first-rate hand, and we want to help him along. He’s got something in him, David has, but his father and his older brother, Dan, don’t amount to much.”

“Dan!” thought Clarence, becoming highly excited at once, “I believe I am on the right track already. The man who was digging in the field called the boy that was with him ‘Dannie.’” Then believing that it might be well for him to know

something about Godfrey before he sought an interview with him, he said aloud :

“How far does this man Evans live from here, and what is his business?”

“He lives about a mile down the river, and has no occupation at all,” answered Don. “He used to be in good circumstances, but having lost everything he possessed, except his land, he is too disheartened to go to work and put himself on his feet again. He spends a little of his time in hunting, and a good deal more in grumbling at his hard luck. He might make a good living for his family with his rifle, if he felt so disposed, for game is abundant, and he is a good hunter and a capital shot ; but he is too lazy to follow even that, the laziest of all occupations.”

After a few more questions Clarence learned so much of Godfrey's history, and of his disposition and habits, that he began to think that he was already well acquainted with him ; and besides Don described him so accurately that he could not fail to recognise him if he once met him. This much had been gained, and now Clarence would have given something if he could have learned more about the property belonging to the family that was buried during the war ; but, after thinking a moment, he decided that it would

be better for him to say nothing at all on this point. He did not want to arouse anybody's suspicions, and besides, Godfrey Evans, when he found him, could tell all he desired to know. He wanted to go to bed now to think over the good fortune that seemed almost within his grasp, so he began to yawn as if he were very sleepy (if his country cousins had been guilty of such an act he would have pronounced them boors at once), and Don and Bert, taking the hint, said good-night and left the room.

The night was as long and dreary to Clarence as the day had been, but for a different reason. He was impatient to be up and doing, and it seemed to him that the morning would never come. He heard the little clock on the mantel strike every hour from ten to five, and then he jumped up because he could stay in bed no longer. He was not called to breakfast at six o'clock, as Marshall had predicted, but the meal was ready at seven, and after they had sat down to it Clarence, to his great disgust, found that Don and Bert had been laying out some very elaborate plans for the entertainment of himself and brother. In the first place it was their intention to spend two or three days in riding about the country, in order to give their city relatives some idea of the manner

in which the people in the South lived, and also to make them acquainted with all the young people in the neighborhood who were worth knowing. Then, of course the boys would call on them, and by the time their visits had been returned, they might begin to look for brant. When they began to come down from the North, the shooting season was close at hand; and if Clarence and Marshall liked to hunt, they would get a party of good fellows together, and go down to the shooting-box and spend a week there. When they were tired of that, they would go 'coon-hunting; and when they had seen all the sport they cared to see in that way, they would trap and shoot some turkeys, or drive the ridges for deer.

"Yes," thought Clarence, while he listened, "it is all very fine, no doubt; but if you think you are going to use up my time in that way, you have reckoned without your host. Amusement indeed! What pleasure would I see in riding about the country calling on these natives? What do I care for your deer or turkeys or your shooting-box? I can't go, at least not to-day, for I have business of my own to attend to."

And he didn't go either; and, what was more, he gave such reasons for declining that his cousins, although somewhat surprised, readily let him off.

He was much too homesick to be any company during a ride, he said, and all he wanted was to go off somewhere and be alone. He would be himself in a day or two, and when he felt more like mingling with people, he would be quite at the service of his cousins, Don and Bert. The latter expressed their regrets, but readily accepted his excuses, and Clarence, after making some inquiries of Don, calculated to draw out information on a few points on which he wished to be posted, went up to his room to prepare himself for his interview with Godfrey Evans. When he came down again he wore a neat hunting-suit, and carried a light Ballard rifle on his shoulder. Don, who met him in the hall, opened his eyes in surprise, and went into ecstasies over the handsome little breech-loader which Clarence presented for his inspection.

"I didn't know that you city fellows ever had an opportunity to use such things as this," said Don, bringing the weapon to his shoulder, and glancing along the clean, brown barrel.

"O, yes, we do," said Clarence. "Rifle-shooting is becoming quite fashionable now-a-days, and I used to spend an hour or two every evening at the gallery. I can make forty-five out of a possible fifty almost any time."

This was Greek to Don, who, however, did not ask any questions, for Clarence had so pompous a way of giving information and looked so surprised when any one asked him to explain his meaning, that Don did not like to show his ignorance. He handed the rifle back to his cousin and saw him walk out of the house, pass through the gate, and turn down the road that led to Godfrey Evans's cabin.

We have already told what sort of a reception he met at Godfrey's hands, and have also described what he did to bring himself to the notice of that gentleman. He knew Godfrey as soon as he put his eyes on him. He studied the man's face closely, and being satisfied with the opinion he formed, easily induced him to accompany him into the woods. He wanted to talk freely with him without running any risk of being overheard, but he hardly knew how to begin the conversation. He wanted to make a friend of his new acquaintance and gain his confidence, and in order to do that, he must be careful how he went to work. The pipe Godfrey had lost the night before, and which Clarence had brought with him in his game-bag, served him a good turn. In attempting to produce the cigars, he accidentally pulled out the pipe also. Godfrey recognised it, and so amazed was he to see his property, which he imagined he

had lost beyond recovery, in the possession of an entire stranger, that he betrayed himself at once. After that it was no trouble for Clarence to open conversation with him about the buried treasure, and neither did he experience any difficulty in persuading Godfrey to accept him as an assistant in the place of Dan. Clarence learned to his great surprise and amusement that he had been the innocent cause of Godfrey's hasty stampede on the previous night, and it was all he could do to refrain from laughing outright at the man's description of the "haunt" he had seen. We have also told what arrangements the worthy pair made in regard to prosecuting the search and dividing the spoils after the barrel was found, and we know that when the interview was ended Clarence went home happy in the belief that he would soon be a rich man, and that no one under his uncle's roof, not even his brother Marshall, would be the wiser for it. No one was the wiser for it then, but there was one who found out all about it a few hours later, and who interfered with his project in a manner so unexpected and effectual, that he not only put a stop to all efforts to find the money, but also came very near driving all the negroes off the plantation, and causing General Gordon the greatest trouble and inconvenience.

CHAPTER XIV.

DON'S EXPERIMENT.

WHEN Clarence reached home after his interview with Godfrey Evans, he found the house deserted by all the family save his aunt Mary. His brother, his uncle and all his cousins had gone off in the carriage to spend the day in riding about the country, and Clarence was left to amuse himself in any way he thought proper. He knew the time would not hang heavily on his hands, for he had much to think about. He wanted to make up his mind just what he would do when he came into possession of his share of the eighty thousand dollars. The thought that possibly he might never get a cent of it—that perhaps there was no barrel hidden in the potato-patch—did not once enter his head. The hope that it might be there, and that he might be fortunate enough to find it, was so strong that it became belief, and Clarence already considered himself as good as rich.

Under pretence of writing a letter to his mother to tell her of his safe arrival at the plantation, he went up stairs, where he passed the rest of the afternoon. He made a very hasty toilet, spent about five minutes in writing the letter—he did not ask his mother for money—as he had expected to do—and then gave himself up to his meditations. He was sorry when his brother and the rest came back from their ride, for after that he could no longer make a hermit of himself. He was obliged to go down and mingle with the family, which he did with a very bad grace.

While they were at the supper-table something was said about the letter he had written, and Don volunteered to take it to the office that very night, so that it might go out with the first mail that left the landing, and requested Clarence to accompany him on horseback—an invitation which the latter, owing to his agreement with Godfrey Evans, was obliged to decline. So Don said he would go alone, and promised to be back shortly after dark, and in time to practise some duets with Clarence on the flute.

“Duetts!” thought Clarence, in great disgust. “Some people have queer ideas of enjoyment. Music

is getting to be the biggest bore in the world to me since I came here, and I wish I had never learned it. If anybody will give me two cents, I'll take that flute of mine and smash it over a chair. It cost me thirty-five dollars, too. I can spend my time to-night much more profitably than in practising duets. What if we should happen to alight on the barrel the very first time trying? Whew! It is too exciting to think about!"

Don rode down to the landing and back alone, reaching the barn about half an hour after dark. Finding that the hostler was not there to take care of his pony, he attended to the animal himself, working in the dark, as there was no lantern nearer than the house, and he did not want to take time to go after it. He hung up his saddle and bridle, and was about to close the barn-doors, when he happened to look toward the house and saw a figure darting along the carriage-way, making use of every tree and clump of bushes to conceal his movements, and stopping now and then to look about, as if he were afraid of being seen by somebody. Don took just one glance at him, and then drawing back behind the door, laid hold of a pitchfork that was always kept standing in the corner. Thieves visited the plantation now and

then after dark, and Don thought he had discovered one of them.

“That fellow is up to something,” said he, as he tightened his grasp on the pitchfork, “and if I keep an eye on him, perhaps I shall find out where our chickens and hams go so mysteriously. It must be some one who is acquainted with the dogs, or they would have raised a fuss before this time. Let him pick up something, if he dares, and we’ll see how quickly he will drop it, when he finds the tines of this pitchfork within an inch of his nose.”

Fairly trembling with excitement Don took off his hat, peeped cautiously around the edge of the door, and watched the motions of the supposed thief. The latter did not pick up anything, however, as Don hoped he would, but took his stand at the corner of the barn, almost within reach of the boy’s hand, and leaning against the building, looked down the road as if he were waiting for somebody. Then Don saw, to his great surprise, that it was his cousin Clarence. He was about to step out and speak to him, when he noticed that Clarence held a lighted cigar in his hand.

“Perhaps I had better stay where I am,” thought Don. “If I go out there, he’ll think I have been

watching him and playing the part of a spy ; and then if father or mother should happen to say anything to him about his smoking, he would accuse me of telling it. I wish he would go somewhere else and enjoy his cigar, and let me go into the house !”

While Don was soliloquising in this way, Clarence suddenly darted off as if he had just thought of something, and making his way to one of the evergreens in the yard, drew from beneath its low, spreading branches a couple of shovels, with which he again approached the barn. Don looked on in great wonder, and, forgetting the resolution he had just formed, was about to reveal himself to his cousin, when the creaking of the gate announced a new arrival. It proved to be Godfrey Evans, who was at once taken to task by Clarence for his long delay. To Don’s amazement the two seemed as familiar as though they had long been acquainted. The question, Where had Clarence met Godfrey before, and what in the world could he have to do with that worthless man ? was hardly formed in Don’s mind before it was answered, not fully, of course, but still in a way to increase his surprise a thousandfold, and to give him, besides, a pretty good idea of the situation. He overheard every word of the conversation that took place between them

and found that they had met there by appointment ; that it was their purpose to dig up a barrel of gold and silver that was supposed to be buried in the potato-patch ; and that Godfrey was very much afraid to undertake the task, for fear that old Jordan's ghost might appear and frighten him away. Don also inferred, from something Godfrey said, that he had already seen the ghost once, and that a second view would be altogether too much for him. After spending five minutes in discussing the matter, Clarence succeeded in infusing a little courage into Godfrey, who accepted one of the shovels and led the way towards the potato-patch.

When the two had disappeared in the darkness, Don set the pitchfork back in its place, and drew a long breath—the first full inspiration he had taken for the last ten minutes. He had been so close to the conspirators all the time that he hardly dared to move a finger, for fear that he should attract their attention.

“ Well, I wonder if anybody ever heard of such a thing as this before ! ” said he, drawing his handkerchief across his forehead. “ If I didn't have the evidence of my own eyes and ears, I shouldn't believe it. Who told them about the barrel, I wonder ! ”

I've heard mother say that old Jordan buried a lot of silver-ware, such as knives, forks and spoons, for her during the war, but I thought she had got the most of it back again. I never heard her say she lost a whole barrellful, and I don't believe she did. The only money that was ever buried on this plantation, was fifteen hundred dollars in gold, and that was hidden under the front steps of the old house. I've seen the place a hundred times. But eighty thousand dollars ! My stars ! I don't believe father ever had so much money at one time in his life. But suppose it was there, and Clarence should find it ; it isn't possible that he would be dishonest enough to keep it. I shouldn't like to think that my own cousin was so great a rascal. Hold on ! I've just thought of a trick that will beat the hollow pumpkin all to pieces."

Talking thus to himself, Don carefully closed and locked the stable-door, and with noiseless footsteps stole along the fence until he arrived opposite the place where Clarence and Godfrey were at work in the field. He could see them plainly, for they were but a few yards from the fence, and as he watched them it was all he could do to keep from giving a few dismal groans, just to see what effect the sound

would have upon them. The only thing that restrained him was the fear that by so doing he would interfere with the plans he had suddenly formed, and which he intended to put into operation the very next day. He did not want to frighten Godfrey away from the potato-patch just then. He wanted him to come again the next night, and by that time he would be ready to show him something. He stayed in the fence-corner for half an hour ; and then knowing that if he remained there any longer, his absence would be certain to attract the attention of the family, and perhaps lead to more questions from his father and mother than he would care to answer, he arose and stole away toward the house

“Have you seen anything of Clarence?” was the first question his cousin Marshall asked him, after he had distributed the mail he brought from the post-office.

“Yes, I saw him. He’s out there,” was the reply.

“Out there!” replied the general. “Out where?”

“Out near the barn when I first saw him,” said Don ; and to himself he added : “I suppose I ought to tell now where he was the last time I saw him, but that would never do. I don’t want to get my cousin into trouble, and neither do I want to spoil

all my fun. Won't I have things fixed for Godfrey to-morrow night, though? I'll scare him so that he will never put his foot on the plantation again!"

"I don't wonder that the time hangs heavily on his hands," continued the general. "Our quiet country life probably has no charms for him, and he is lonely and homesick."

This seemed to be the verdict of all the members of the family, who, being willing to make due allowances and give their city relative all the privileges he demanded, said no more about his absence. They welcomed him very cordially when he came in, two hours later, but asked him no questions. Indeed, Clarence did not wait to be questioned. He went to bed almost immediately, and Don soon followed him.

The next day the general went off somewhere on business, and the boys were left to amuse themselves in any way they pleased. Bert and Marshall got into one of the canoes and set off to visit the shooting-box. They asked Don and Clarence to go with them; but the latter could not see that there was any fun in riding a mile or two in a leaky dug-out for the purpose of looking at an old shantee in the woods, and Don had other business on hand, so neither of them accepted the invitation. Clarence found the

most pleasure in getting away by himself and thinking about the fortune of which he expected very soon to be the master, while Don wanted to spend at least a portion of the forenoon in getting ready to receive Godfrey Evans when he came to the potato-patch that night ; and as they both desired to be alone, they did not in any way interfere with each other.

As soon as Clarence could find an excuse for so doing, he went up stairs to his room ; and Don, being left to himself, managed to secure a rusty key which hung on a nail in the kitchen, and to effect an entrance into a long-unused room in the rear of the barn ; and he performed both these necessary operations without attracting the attention of any one.

As soon as he had locked the door behind him Don breathed easier, and stopped to look about him. The room had once belonged to old Jordan, the runaway negro, who had served as the general's hostler in the days gone by. Being a very faithful and a favorite servant, he had received many favors, and was also allowed the privilege of a room to himself. The apartment looked just as it did on the day the sable occupant deserted it. Not a thing had been disturbed, and Don was the only one who had entered

the room since the morning following the day on which the levee was cut. When Mrs. Gordon became satisfied that old Jordan had run away, she gave instructions that the room should be closed and locked and the window nailed down, so that nobody could enter it. Jordan would be sure to come back some day, she said, and when he did, he would find his property secure, and his room waiting for him. But the years had gone by, the old fellow had never been heard from, and everybody began to think he was dead.

The first thing Don did, after locking the door behind him, was to take from his pocket a small bundle, which being undone proved to contain a brush and a box of blacking. His next move was to open a huge chest that stood at the head of the bed. In it he found four articles he needed—a suit of clothes neatly folded up; a gaudily-colored handkerchief; a shining plug hat, that had once been the property of the general; and a pair of heavy plantation shoes, like those which used to be so extensively manufactured in New England under the name of “russets.” The fifth article Don needed to complete the disguise he was about to assume was a walking-stick, and that stood in the corner behind the chest.

Having selected everything he wanted, Don quickly divested himself of his outer clothing, and in two minutes more had put on old Jordan's Sunday suit, which fitted him well enough for all practical purposes. The shoes were much too large, but by putting a roll of paper in the toe of each, he found that he could walk in them very well. He wrapped the handkerchief about his head, leaving the ends hanging down behind, and taking care to cover up all his hair so that no one could see it, and placed the plug hat on the top of it. Then the blacking brush, and the three-cornered piece of looking glass that was nailed against the wall, came into use, and in a few minutes more Don had made such a change in his appearance that his own father would not have recognised him.

"I wish I had some of that burnt cork, or whatever it is, that the minstrels use to blacken their faces," said the boy, glancing into the little mirror after he had finished his work. "My white skin shows through almost too much. But, after all, who cares for that? It will be dark when I present myself to Godfrey, and I shall have no need to be so very particular about my hands and face. I say! this is going to a good deal of trouble for a little fun,

isn't it? No matter; if I can see Godfrey run as he did on the night he saw the pumpkin with the lighted candle in it, I shall be well repaid."

Don could remember old Jordan very well, for, although he was young when the latter went away, his peculiar actions and odd style of dress had made a lasting impression on him. Besides, he had heard him described time and again; and his sayings had been so often repeated, and his style of locomotion so frequently imitated by those who knew him, that Don thought he should have no difficulty in passing himself off for old Jordan. Now that he was dressed and ready for the performance, he thought it would be a great pity to assume his own character again before he had tested his disguise.

This thought had no sooner suggested itself to him than he prepared to act upon it. Everything favored him. The door of the room, opening as it did into a narrow passage-way that led from the barn into the corn-crib, was out of sight of anybody who might happen to be on the barn floor. The only difficult thing for him to do, was to get out of the passage-way without being seen. That being accomplished he did not care who saw him—provided, of course, that the

members of the family kept out of the way—for no one could tell where he came from.

“But I must first make sure of a way of retreat,” thought Don, as he looked about the room for something with which to draw the nails that held the window. “I must get back into this room, somehow, and it may not be quite safe to get back the same way I go out.”

But Don could not find a hammer or anything else to draw the nails with, so he broke them off by prying them up and down with the end of his walking-stick. Then he raised the window, placing a stick under it to keep it open, and unhooked the shutter which fitted tightly enough to remain closed, even when it was not fastened. After that he looked into the mirror again, touched up one or two white spots on his hands and face, grasped his walking-stick, and slipped out into the passage-way. Locking the door he put the key into his pocket, and moved cautiously down the passage-way until he could look into the barn.

There was no one there except the hostler, and he was busy and his back was turned toward Don. Moving with noiseless footsteps, the boy succeeded in walking out into the middle of the floor before he

was discovered. He did not expect to be recognised by the hostler, for the latter was a new hand who had never been acquainted with Jordan; but there were some negroes at work in the field close by who knew the old fellow he was now personating, and toward them Don directed his course.

The hostler looked up from his work when he heard the sound of footsteps behind him, and seeing a strange negro approaching, spoke to him very civilly; but Don took no notice of him. He was playing ghost now, and ghosts did not speak to anybody—at least he had never heard that they did. Walking straight out of the door he turned toward the place where the negroes were at work, and had not made many steps before one of them discovered him. He straightened up quickly, shaded his eyes with his hand, and said a few words in a low tone to his companions, who also turned and looked at Don. They gazed fixedly at him for a moment, and then broke out into a chorus of greeting.

“Bress my soul an’ body, if dar ain’t ole uncle Jordan!” they exclaimed in concert.

“It’s all right,” thought Don. “If they can’t recognise me in the daytime, I am sure Godfrey Evans will not know me in the dark. I believe if

I should go into the house I could fool everybody there."

Scarcely able to control himself, so great was his desire to laugh, Don kept straight on toward the negroes, who had dropped their hoes and were hurrying up to shake hands with him. His silence seemed to surprise them greatly. They stopped short, looked curiously at him first, then suspiciously, and after exchanging a few words that Don could not hear, began backing out of his way.

"'Tain't ole Jordan, nudder," suddenly exclaimed one of the negroes.

"O, hush yer noise, boy," said another. "Don't I know dot ole white coat, an' dot plug hat dot ole marse guv him on dot Christmas day, jest 'fore he went away to de wah? Yes, I does."

"No odds," replied the one who had first spoken. "'Tain't ole Jordan. He's dead, an' dis is his haunt." These words were all that were needed to frighten the superstitious field-hands almost out of their senses. They did not go into a panic and run, as Don hoped they would, but retreated out of his way and watched him from a distance, looking at one another now and then, and shaking their heads and acting altogether as if they were at their wits' end. Don took a short

turn about the field—he did not dare to stay out there very long for fear of being seen by somebody in the house—and then turned toward the barn again.

As soon as the corn-crib hid him from the gaze of the negroes, he straightened up and ran swiftly to the window that opened into old Jordan's room. Throwing back the shutter he scrambled through as quickly as he could, and shutting himself in, laid down on old Jordan's bed and shook all over with suppressed laughter. He heard the footsteps and the voices of the negroes as they passed around the barn, looking for him; and the few words of their conversation which he overheard satisfied him that his experiment had been a decided success. He must have imitated old Jordan perfectly to be taken for him in broad daylight.

CHAPTER XV.

A JOKE THAT WAS NO JOKE.

WE have already described the other tests to which Don put his disguise during the forenoon, and we know that every one who saw him believed him to be old Jordan's ghost. Godfrey, especially, was greatly alarmed, and Don had the satisfaction of seeing him run, which was a sight worth going miles to behold. The magical manner in which he appeared and vanished, was very bewildering to all who witnessed it; but it would have been no mystery at all, had they been aware that the window that led into old Jordan's room was unfastened. As they could see nothing of Don after he went behind the corn-crib, they naturally concluded that he had vanished into thin air. In no other way could they account for his disappearance.

Don had wasted a good deal of time in these experiments, and now the ringing of the dinner-bell admonished him that he must pull off his disguise,

and hurry back to the house. Another thing that warned him to make haste, was the knowledge that he had thrown the negroes into a state of great excitement and alarm. He was afraid they might tell his parents what they had seen, and that would bring about an investigation.

“It would never do to be caught in the act,” thought Don, as he hastily pulled off old Jordan’s clothes and bundled them into the chest. “I don’t know what father would say to me. But didn’t Godfrey run, though? I declare it seems selfish for me to enjoy all this fun by myself. I wish I had some good fellow to help me laugh!”

Don stopped for a few minutes to indulge in a very hearty but silent fit of merriment, and then having put on his clothes, and wiped the black off his hands and face with a damp cloth which he had taken the precaution to bring with him, he glanced about the room to make sure that he had left everything just as he had found it, and went out, locking the door behind him. He reached the house and made his way to his room without being seen, and having performed a hasty toilet, went down to the dining-room in time to learn that the measures he had taken to frighten Godfrey Evans, had succeeded almost too

well. One of the servant girls was standing at the door showing a good deal of the whites of her eyes, and looking altogether as if she were highly excited about something.

"It's all nonsense, Jane," Don heard his mother say.

"No odds, missus," replied the girl. "Sam say he can't hitch up dem hosses no mo'. He wouldn't go nigh dat barn, he say, fur no money in dis broad world. He done seed it, suah."

Don, well knowing what it was that the girl referred to, and hardly able to control himself, so great was his desire to laugh, glanced about the table to see what the family thought about it. They were all there, and their faces expressed the greatest astonishment. Even the general elevated his eyebrows, and turned about in his chair to look at the girl. Don sat down in his place and tried to look as surprised as the rest did; and then recollecting that he had yet seen or heard nothing to be surprised at, he asked:

"What's the matter?"

"Why, mother just sent out word to Sam to hitch up the horses," said Bert, "and he sent back word that he couldn't think of it."

“Why not?” inquired Don.

“O, because he’s got it into his head that there’s something out there—something that looks like old Jordan.”

“Never mind, Jane. I will look into the matter after dinner,” said the general.

The girl disappeared, and the family being left alone, devoted themselves to the viands before them and to discussing the strange incidents that were reported to have happened at the barn during the forenoon. Don found that, for a wonder, the story of his exploits had been told without the exaggeration common in such cases, but, to keep up appearances, he was obliged to feign ignorance, and inquire particularly into things. Bert and his mother declared that it was all moonshine—that the hostler had not seen anything; but the general was pretty well convinced that something had happened, and that an investigation would not be out of place. It was a wonder that no one suspected Don, and perhaps the reason was because he looked so innocent.

The investigation came off immediately after dinner, but nothing new was brought to light. The hostler told his story in a straightforward manner and produced his witnesses to prove what he said;

and so positive were they all that they had seen Jordan's haunt about the barn but a few hours before, that the general began to think that perhaps the old fellow had returned after his long absence, but, for some reason which he could not explain, was keeping himself as close as possible. The general tried to laugh the matter off at first, but soon found that it was much too serious for that; and his face assumed an expression of trouble and anxiety when he found that the field hands, one and all, had sent him word by the hostler that when night came, they would call on him for the money that was due them.

"I am really afraid I have made a mess of it," thought Don, when he heard this. "I had no idea that I was going to scare everybody so badly, and I wish now I hadn't done it. No matter, it will soon be over now. I'll frighten Godfrey to-night, if he comes after that barrel, and then I'll never play old Jordan again!"

The general looked grave and seemed greatly perplexed, and so did Mrs. Gordon; while the boys, Don among the rest, declared that there must be some explanation for the strange things that had happened in the barn that morning, and spent the rest of the day in trying to clear away the mystery.

They looked in every place, except the one in which they would have been the most likely to find some clue to aid them in their search, and hunted for everything except the right one. They all believed now—all except Don, of course—that old Jordan had come back, and they looked everywhere for him, except in his room. They knew he could not have gone in there if he had been so disposed, for the door was locked.

Night came at last, and so did all the negroes employed on the plantation, who asked for their money. The general, knowing that it would be of no use to argue with them, declined to pay them off until the year for which they were hired was ended; but he promised that, if they saw the apparition again and would show it to him, he would settle with them at once and let them all go. Don breathed easier after that. He was afraid that his propensity for mischief was about to occasion his father great inconvenience, and he was glad that the trouble could be averted without a confession on his part. He told himself that his father would never see the apparition. He would take precious good care to avoid that.

Don did not put on old Jordan's clothes that night, because Godfrey did not come to the potato-patch as

he had agreed. Clarence waited and watched for him until nine o'clock, and as soon as he could slip away from his relatives the next morning, he went down to Godfrey's cabin to see what had kept him at home. Don followed him at a distance, and saw that his cousin held a long and earnest conversation with Godfrey, and that he seemed to be very much elated about something when he came back. By putting these two things together, Don arrived at the conclusion that Godfrey would be on hand that night, and so he was. Don happened to be on the watch when he went into the summer-house; and knowing that Godfrey would not come so far unless he intended to go the rest of the way, he ran back to the house to get ready for him. It was certainly provoking, when he was in so great a hurry, to find the kitchen occupied by two servants, who would surely see him if he took the key to Jordan's room down from its nail, and who, besides, would be certain to speak about it. They must be got out of the room somehow, and there was no time to waste.

"Jane," said Don, suddenly, "did you hear mother calling you?"

"No, sar," replied the girl, jumping up.

"I didn't either," was Don's mental comment, as

she hurried away. "Ben," he added, turning to the old negro who sat in the chimney-corner, "what did old preacher Hudson want of you just a few minutes ago?"

"Sar?" exclaimed Ben. "I didn't see no preacher Hudson to-day, sar!"

"Why, wasn't he out at the gate just now calling for you?"

"Mebbe so, sar," replied Ben, rising and picking up his hat, "but I didn't see him. Mebbe he's dar now."

"I don't think he is," said Don, to himself, "but it will not hurt you to go out and see; and in the meantime——"

Don put the key into his pocket as soon as Ben was out of sight, and lost no time in making his way to the barn. At the door he met the hostler.

"Time to lock up now, Mr. Don," said the latter, "but I'se a little jubus 'bout dat barn, sar. Yes, sar, I'se a little jubus!"

"Well, then, go back to your quarters and I will lock the doors," replied Don.

The hostler, glad to be relieved of so disagreeable a duty, turned and went off, and Don, after closing all the doors, and locking all except one, hurried

into old Jordan's room. It was the work of but a few minutes to put on the negro's clothes and black his face and hands; and this being done, he seized a shovel, and stealing out of the barn, climbed the fence and ran across the potato-patch. About thirty yards from the fence he stopped, and crouching down close to the ground, waited to see what was going to happen. Presently he heard cautious footsteps, and a few seconds later two heads appeared above the top rail of the fence.

"There they are," thought Don, his heart beating rapidly with excitement. "Now I'll see if either of them has courage enough to come over the fence after they find out I am here."

As these thoughts passed through Don's mind he arose to his feet, and driving his shovel into the ground began throwing out the dirt so rapidly, that in a very short space of time he had dug a hole as large as a moderate workman would have been able to dig in ten minutes. He worked till the perspiration started out all over him, but kept his eyes fastened on the two heads, which could be seen plainly above the fence. He knew that the owners of the heads heard the sound of the shovel, and that they were listening to it and talking about it. They stood

there at the fence so long that Don began to think they were too badly frightened to come any nearer.

“I am afraid I haven’t managed this thing quite right,” thought Don. “I ought to have let them come into the field first, and then showed myself to them while they were at work. Godfrey will never come within reach of me again while I have these clothes on.”

Very likely Godfrey never would, if he had been left to himself; but Don had somebody else to contend with, and that was his cousin Clarence, upon whom he had thus far scarcely bestowed a thought. Clarence had more courage than Godfrey. He had almost too much, Don afterward thought, when he found himself tied up in the potato-hole.

The two stood at the fence and talked and listened for a few minutes, and then to Don’s great surprise, and somewhat to his alarm, they jumped over into the field and came toward him, Clarence leading the way.

Don had half a mind to throw down his shovel and take to his heels; but suppose he had done so, and the swift-footed Godfrey, emboldened by his flight, had followed and caught him! What then? It would have turned the joke upon himself, and

besides Clarence would have found that his cousin was acquainted with his secret, and that was something Don did not want him to know.

“I am between two fires,” thought Don, almost ready to laugh in spite of his fear of detection, “and for once in my life I have overreached myself. I am sure to be found out, no matter whether I run away or stay here, and then what will Clarence think of himself? Could he ever face father again, after entering into a conspiracy to rob him of eighty thousand dollars? I’d like to spare his feelings if I can. Perhaps if I keep on digging, and act as though I didn’t see or hear them, they will become frightened and go away.”

This was Don’s only hope now, but it did not last long, for it was hardly formed in his mind before Clarence marched up and seized him by the arm. Don was highly amused by the conversation the two engaged in when they came close to him ; and when Clarence lighted a match and surveyed him by the light it threw out, he would have spoken, had his cousin made the least sign of recognition. But Clarence could see no resemblance between those black features and Don’s handsome face ; and besides Godfrey was so positive that they had captured old

Jordan himself, that he never had a suspicion of the truth.

Don played the part of ghost as long as he could, and spoke only when he found that he must, or feel the weight of Godfrey's shovel in his ribs. As he could see no way out of the difficulty in which he was placed, he trusted entirely to luck, hoping that Clarence would let him go without compelling him to tell who he was. He heard all that passed between the two, and was not a little amazed to learn that he was to be confined in the potato-hole, and left without anything to eat or drink, until he was ready to tell where the barrel was hidden. He pondered the matter deeply while he was being led across the field and down the road toward Godfrey's cabin, but did not reveal himself, because he still clung to the hope that something might turn up in his favor. He uttered a feeble protest against the treatment he was receiving, just as he believed old Jordan would have done, had he been in the same situation, but of course it did no good. While Godfrey was gone for the rope and he was alone with Clarence, he was several times on the point of speaking out, but could not without doing the very thing he most wished to avoid. While he was thinking about it, Godfrey came back,

and almost before he knew it, he was confined in the cellar, and Clarence and Godfrey were out of hearing.

"Here I am," thought Don, "and if I don't get out and reach home very shortly after Clarence does there will be a hubbub indeed. I wish I hadn't done it. What a desperate fellow that Clarence Gordon is! If he doesn't turn over a new leaf pretty soon, he will come to some bad end as sure as he is a living boy. What will he have to say for himself when he finds out what he has done? O, I must get away!"

But Don's resolutions amounted to nothing, and neither did the efforts he made to free himself from his bonds. Godfrey had done his work well, and Don could move neither hand nor foot. He tried to pull the stanchion down, but it was as solid as it was the first day it was put up there, and Don could not even shake it. He was fast, and there he must stay until some one came to release him. His feelings, as he began to realize this fact, were none of the pleasantest, but still they were much more agreeable than his cousin's were the next morning, when he first learned from Godfrey Evans who it was that he had assisted to capture and imprison the night before; and to him we will now turn before we tell how Don got out, and what happened to him afterward.

We left Clarence leaning against the corn-crib, almost overwhelmed with the startling disclosures his companion in trouble had just made to him.

“I can see through some of it now jest as easy as fallin’ off a log,” moaned Godfrey, rocking himself back and forth as he sat on the ground, “an’ I blame myself fur not seein’ through it sooner. That thar Don is a great feller fur tricks, an’ here he’s gone an’ dressed hisself up like ole Jordan so’s to fool me an’ the rest.”

“If that is the case,” said Clarence, who at last succeeded in finding his tongue, “he must have known about the barrel; and how did he find that out?”

“I didn’t say I could see through it all, did I?” demanded Godfrey. “That’s the part I can’t understand, no more’n I can understand how you fust come to know about the bar’l.”

“How do you know it was Don?” asked Clarence, who could not realize the situation in which he was placed. “You haven’t been near the cellar this morning, have you?”

“No, I hain’t; but I know it’s Mr. Don all the same,” replied Godfrey. “Did ye never hear him whistle? Wal, I have. He can whistle so’t ye can

hear him a mile ; an' the fust thing I heerd this mornin', when I opened my eyes, was him a whistlin' like he was a callin' his dogs. I went to the door an' listened, kase somethin' kinder told me that mebbe things wasn't jest right like they'd oughter be, an' if them whistles didn't come from that tater-hole, I ain't a settin' here."

"Couldn't old Jordan whistle?" asked Clarence, who still clung to the hope that Godfrey was mistaken.

"Not like that, an' nuther could anybody else. I tell you he's thar, Mr. Clarence, an' now what's goin' to become of me an' you?"

"De pony ready, sar," said the hostler, showing himself at the end of the crib at this moment.

"Whar ye goin'?" asked Godfrey, as Clarence moved away. "Don't leave me now. I'm in a power of trouble an' trib'lotion!"

"Am I any better off, I'd like to know?" demanded the boy angrily. "You think of no one but yourself. Here am I, fifteen hundred miles from home, and with scarcely twenty dollars that I can call my own."

"That's more'n I've got," whined Godfrey.

"I shouldn't care a snap if we had only found the

barrel," continued Clarence. "With my pockets full of money I could go anywhere; but as it is, how am I going to get home? That's what troubles me. Of course I can't stay here!"

"No more can I," said Godfrey.

"Yes, you can. No one will ever say a word to you about it; but I can't face any of my uncle's family after what I have done. Of course Don will blow the whole thing the minute he gets out. He can't avoid it, unless he tells a lie, and that's something he says he never did in his life. I wish to goodness I could say as much!"

Clarence had, beyond a doubt, placed himself in a very unpleasant situation, and the longer he talked and thought about it, the more vividly did the fact seem to impress itself upon his mind. One thing was certain: he could not stay under his uncle's roof any longer, and he thought it would be policy to get as far as possible out of the way before the general returned. He ran around the corner of the crib to the place where the pony was standing, and paying no heed to Godfrey's earnest entreaties that he would stay just long enough to tell him what he ought to do under the circumstances, Clarence sprang into the saddle and galloped out of the yard. Almost invol-

untarily he turned down the road toward Godfrey's cabin. He had a vague idea that something might yet be done to avert the calamity he so much dreaded. If Don would promise to say nothing about what had happened the night before, and make up some plausible story to tell his father, he (Clarence) would release him, and read him a lecture on the subject of practical joking. That much being arranged, he could, perhaps, content himself on the plantation for two weeks longer, during which time he could write to his mother, who would be sure to send him money to take him home, if he asked for it. As soon as it arrived he would bid good-by to all his relatives in Mississippi; and when he was once safely on board a steamer bound up the river, he did not care how soon Don told about passing the night in the potato-hole. The longer Clarence thought of this, the more feasible did the plan seem. It all rested with Don, and he was a good-hearted fellow, who, for the sake of keeping his cousin out of trouble, ought to be willing to tell a lie. Clarence thought it would do no harm to ask him, at any rate; and with this object in view he put the pony into a gallop, and went down the lane at a more rapid rate than he had ever before travelled on horseback.

Arriving at the turn in the road, where he had remained to keep guard over the prisoner while Godfrey was gone after the rope, Clarence dismounted, tied the pony to a swinging branch, climbed the fence and made his way through the brier-patch toward the potato-hole. He listened repeatedly, but could not hear Don's whistle, and he hoped that it was because his cousin was tired and had stopped to rest; but something told him that it was because he had been liberated. This proved to be the truth of the matter, as Clarence found when he reached the cellar. The door stood wide open, and looking in he saw the plough-line with which his cousin had been bound, lying in pieces at the foot of the stanchion.

"It's all over with me," thought Clarence, hurrying away from the cellar with as much haste as he would have exhibited had he seen some frightful object there. "Very likely he is at home by this time telling all he knows. I wish I was at home too. I don't see why I ever consented to come here."

Clarence suddenly stopped and listened intently. A few weeks ago he would not have noticed the sound that attracted his attention, but he noticed it now, faint as it was, and he was glad to hear it, too. It was the sound of a steam whistle, and it came from the river below him. He recognised it at once,

for he had heard it often during his journey down the river. "That's the Emma Deane," thought he. "She has been to New Orleans, and is now on her way up the river. Can I reach the landing in time to catch her, I wonder? I will, if Don's pony has the wind to stand the gallop."

Clarence ran through the brier-patch, scratching his hands and face and tearing his clothes at almost every step, but nothing could stop his progress. Reaching the fence where he had left the pony, he quickly untied him, and jumping on his back, went tearing up the road with all the speed the spirited little animal could be induced to put forth. He did not look up when he passed his uncle's house, but kept his hat down over his eyes, urged on the pony, and finally disappeared around the bend, and entered a thick piece of woods that bounded that side of General Gordon's plantation. As he dashed along wholly engrossed with his gloomy thoughts, and intent on reaching the landing before the steamer, there was a violent rustling among the bushes, the pony jumped quickly to one side, and his rider, being taken off his guard, was thrown flat in the middle of the dusty lane. Clarence scrambled to his feet and made a blind dash to recover the bridle which had been pulled from his grasp, but the pony was too quick

for him. He wheeled on the instant, flourished his heels in the air and started for home.

Clarence was not injured in the least by the fall, but he was pretty well shaken, and so nearly blinded by the dust that it was a minute or two before he could collect his scattered senses, and clear his eyes so that he could take note of what was going on around him. The first thing he saw was the pony's white tail disappearing around the turn in the road, and the next was Godfrey Evans, who arose from a thicket of bushes, and hurrying up laid hold of the boy's collar.

"I'm pretty badly shaken up, but I don't need any help," said Clarence, who was already on his feet. "Hallo! what's the matter with you?"

Clarence had by this time cleared the dust from his eyes so that he could take a good look at his companion. There was an expression on his face that he had never seen there before, and he did not know what to make of it.

"Why don't you let go my collar?" demanded Clarence.

"Kase I want them twenty dollars ye've got in yer pocket—that's why," replied Godfrey, savagely.

Clarence was too amazed to speak.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

HAND 'em out here, I say," repeated Godfrey, "an' don't waste no time in thinkin' about it, nuther!"

"You've turned highwayman, have you?" said the boy, recovering his power of speech by an effort. "Well, you shan't have the money. I have use for it myself, and I could easily use more if I had it."

"So can I use it," said Godfrey, "an' I'm going to have it, too. Yer mighty good to yerself, ain't ye? Yer going off to yer home, fifteen hundred miles away, an' leave me to bear the brunt of this business as best I can. But I ain't agoin' to stay nuther. I'm goin' away, too. Hand 'em out here!"

"And what shall I do?" asked Clarence, who began to grow alarmed when he saw how determined Godfrey was. "How shall I get home without any money to pay my way?"

"Hand 'em out here, I say, an' be quick about

it," answered Godfrey, making an effort to put his hand into the boy's pocket. "I don't care how ye get hum. Ye got me into this scrape an' ye must pay my way outen it; that's how the thing stands."

"I'll not go home at all," exclaimed Clarence, doubling himself up and resisting to the utmost all Godfrey's efforts to force his hand into his pocket. "I'll stay and see this thing out on purpose to have you arrested."

"I shall be miles back in the swamp in less'n an hour," replied Godfrey, becoming enraged at the boy's opposition and throwing him flat on his back in the road. "I've got my rifle with me, an' the fust man that follows me will come to his death!"

Clarence did not doubt this in the least, for the expression on Godfrey's face told him that he was terribly in earnest. He was like a child in the angry man's grasp, but knowing how much depended on the small stock of money he had in his pocket he fought desperately to retain possession of it, but all to no purpose. Godfrey rolled him over, face downward, and holding him fast with one hand, quickly found the pocket-book with the other and pulled it out. He was about to examine it to make sure that the money was in it, but just then his ear caught the

clatter of a horse's hoofs on the hard road. He listened to it a moment, and then jumped up and ran into the thicket from which he had just emerged; while Clarence, being equally anxious to avoid observation, scrambled to his feet with all haste and plunged into an opposite thicket. Almost overcome with the violence of his exertions he lay flat upon the ground, behind a convenient log, until the horseman came in sight, and then quickly ducked his head and held his breath. It was his uncle. He passed swiftly along, looking neither to the right nor left, and disappeared around a bend in the road.

"Whew!" panted Clarence. "Wasn't that a narrow escape? What if I had waited to tell him about the robbery, as I at first meant to do? This is a little ahead of any experience I have had yet."

Clarence looked up and down the road to make sure that the coast was clear, and then came out and crossed over to the opposite side to look for Godfrey. He was not to be seen. Clarence listened intently, but could hear nothing but the sighing of the wind through the branches of the trees. He called Godfrey's name as loudly as he dared, but no answer was returned.

"He's gone," thought the boy, "and so are my

twenty dollars; and here I am, two miles from the landing, afoot and alone. I wish I dared stay and have that fellow hunted up and punished. But I'd much rather lose the money than face my uncle after he finds out what I have done. I declare, I'm a nice-looking fellow to go among folks," he added, looking down at his coat, which was sadly soiled and torn. "And the worst of it is, I shall continue to look this way for some days to come."

Clarence thumped his clothes energetically to knock the dust out of them, settled his hat firmly on his head and set out at his best pace in the direction of Rochdale. He ran almost all the way, and the last half mile he made in remarkably quick time considering the circumstances, for he heard the Emma Deane whistle as she approached the landing. When he turned into the street on which the post-office stood, he was almost ready to drop with fatigue, but he was obliged to run faster than ever, for he heard the bell ring, and he knew that that was a signal to the crew to stand by the lines. He hoped there would be no one at the landing to see him, but he did not know the habits of the planters living in the vicinity. They were out in full force, and Clarence, as he dashed through them with his hat in his hand and

the perspiration streaming from his face, excited no little astonishment, as he knew by the remarks he heard on every side. He staggered up the staging, and unable to go a step farther, sat down on the stairs that led to the boiler-deck, and panted loudly. The mates of the boat and the shipping clerk thought they recognised him, but were not quite sure about it; and that was not to be wondered at, for he looked very unlike the dashing, fashionably-dressed young fellow who had spent his money so freely for ale and cigars on the down trip.

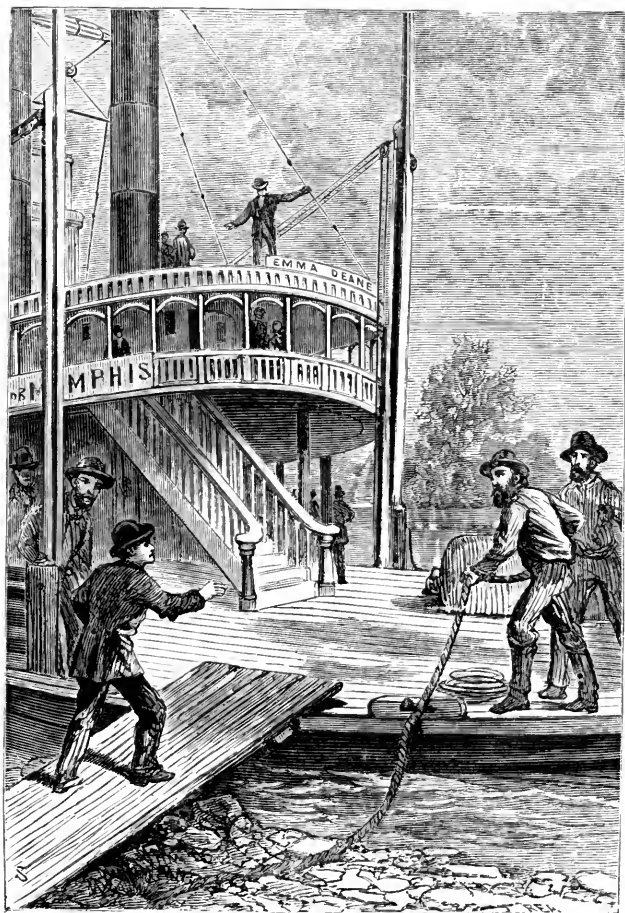
“Is this you, Gordon?” exclaimed the clerk.

“It’s what is left of me,” gasped Clarence.

“Why, how did you ever get into this fix? Your clothes are torn——”

“I know,” interrupted Clarence. “Wait until I recover my breath, and I’ll tell you all about it.”

Clarence reached the steamer just in time; for, as he sank panting and exhausted upon the stairs, the lines were cast off, and in five minutes more the Emma Deane was on her way up the river. The clerk superintended the getting out of the freight that was to be put off at the next landing, and then came and sat down beside Clarence, who, by this time, began to feel a little more like himself.



CLARENCE ESCAPES ON THE "EMMA DEANE."

“Am I not a pretty looking object?” said the latter.

“Well, I’ve seen you when I thought you looked better,” answered the clerk, with a laugh. “Been taking a rough and tumble with somebody ashore?”

“No,” replied Clarence.

“You left your baggage, didn’t you?”

“I have none. I am only going to Cairo on business for my uncle. I left home on a skittish young horse, that I was to leave at the landing until my uncle could send for him, but he did not bring me all the way. He threw me up there in the woods, and dragged me about twenty yards with my foot in the stirrup, before I could free myself. But I had no idea I was so badly used up,” said Clarence, rising to his feet and pulling off his coat. “If I had, I should have gone back and made a new start with another suit of clothes. I say, haven’t you an extra coat to sell? The rest of my clothes will do until I reach Cairo.”

“Perhaps I can accommodate you,” said the clerk. “Come up to my room, and after you have taken a wash and a brush you’ll look better.”

Clarence accompanied the clerk to his room in Texas (that is the name given to the upper cabin in

river steamers), and after he had bathed his hands and face, and given his clothes a thorough brushing he proceeded to make an estimate of the damages he had received. He decided that his trowsers, boots and vest would pass muster, and so would his shirt and collar, although they were both pretty badly rumpled; but the coat was torn beyond all repair, and was fit only for somebody's rag-bag. The clerk thought so too, and took down from a nail in his room a coat which he said he didn't need, and which Clarence might wear and welcome if he were only going on to Cincinnati; but as he was to stop off at Cairo, perhaps he had better buy it. Clarence thought now that he would have played his game a little sharper if he had said nothing about stopping at Cairo; but, in order to make the story he had yet to tell appear reasonable, he was obliged to hold to what he had already said.

"Unfortunately I am not going to Cincinnati," said he. "My business will take me no farther than Cairo. What's the coat worth?"

"Well, I don't think five dollars would be too much; do you?"

"O, no. I'll willingly give you that."

Clarence laid down the coat, thrust his hand into

his pocket, and then stopped and looked at the clerk, while a blank look settled on his face. After standing motionless for a moment, he began with frantic haste to empty all his pockets. This done he sank down on the clerk's bed, his hands dropped by his side, and he looked dejected enough.

"Is it gone?" asked the clerk, who readily understood this pantomime.

"Yes, sir, it's gone—my pocket-book with an even hundred dollars in it. Now, am I not in a nice fix? How am I going to pay my fare to Cairo and back?"

"It must have dropped out of your pocket when your horse threw you," said the clerk.

"That's just the way it happened, and every cent I had was in it, too."

Clarence looked up and saw that the clerk's gaze was fastened on his watch that lay on the bed; and that same watch, which was a birth-day present from his mother, was the boy's sole dependence now. When he was passing through the brier-patch, on his way to the cellar where his cousin was confined, the long chain, which dangled from his button-hole, was constantly catching on the bushes, and Clarence had unhooked it and put it into his pocket with the watch. Probably that was all that saved the time-piece, for

had Godfrey Evans seen the chain, he might have taken that and the watch as well as the money.

“Do you suppose there is any one on board who will advance me anything on that?” asked Clarence, brightening up as if the idea had just occurred to him.

“I was thinking about it,” replied the clerk. “You might try our chief engineer. He’s always trading watches when he thinks he can make any thing by it.”

“I don’t want to sell the watch,” said Clarence. “I only want to borrow some money on it. I shall return to Rochdale at once, and by the time you come down again, I shall be ready to redeem it.”

“I understand,” said the clerk. “The engineer is in his room now.”

“Then let’s try him at once. Come with me, will you? You know him better than I do.”

The clerk showed Clarence the way into the engineer’s room, where that officer, having just come off watch, was taking his usual forenoon nap. He greeted Clarence cordially—he had smoked more than one cigar at the boy’s expense during the down trip—and listened patiently to the story he had to tell. He examined the watch and said he would

advance fifty dollars on it, provided the owner would be ready to redeem it the next time the Emma Deane stopped at Rochdale. This Clarence readily promised to do ; so the money was paid at once, the officer pocketed the watch, and the boy went out feeling as if a mountain had been removed from his shoulders. He gave the clerk five dollars for his coat, paid his fare to Cairo, and still had left a sum of money sufficiently large to take him home, provided he did not spend too much for cigars and ale. Half an hour later he was sitting on the boiler deck with his chair tilted back, his feet on the railing, a cigar between his teeth, and looking as happy and contented as though he had never known a moment's trouble in his life.

“ Things don't look quite as dark as they did,” said he, throwing back his head and watching the smoke as it ascended from his cigar. “ I didn't lose anything by making friends of the officers of this boat on the down trip. Now that I am safely out of the scrape, I'd give something to know what is going on down there at the plantation. Forty thousand dollars ! The last chance I shall ever have to make a fortune has slipped through my fingers ; and all through Don's interference. He deserved just what

he got, and I hope it will teach him to mind his own business."

During the journey homeward this was the burden of the boy's reflections. He knew that by his conduct he had destroyed his chance of living on intimate or even friendly terms with his uncle's family, but for that he cared not; he scarcely even thought of it. If he had only found the barrel, and received his share of the contents, he imagined he would have been supremely happy. He reached home in safety, and of course his parents were very much surprised to see him. He told his mother the whole truth, keeping back nothing, and left her to tell his father. Mr. Gordon did not have much to say until he had had time to write to his brother in Mississippi. What sort of an answer he received to his letter, Clarence never knew; but one bright morning, shortly after the letter came, he was ordered to be ready to start for New York at four o'clock that afternoon. Then he knew that his father's patience was all exhausted, and that he was to be placed where he would be controlled by an iron hand. Entreaties and promises of better behavior in future were alike unavailing. To New York he went, and his father accompanied him. Mr. Gordon came back alone,

and the next time anybody heard from Clarence, he was off the coast of France in the school ship. "The officers are awful hard on us," wrote Clarence, and there were volumes in that short sentence. If any boy desires to find out the full meaning of it for himself, a voyage across the water and back will teach him more than he will care to know. Clarence is in the school ship now; and a letter Mr. Gordon lately received from the captain, states that a steadier, more obedient young sailor never lived. Discipline has worked a great change in him, and it is to be hoped that he will profit by it when his term of service expires.

And where was Don all this time? While Clarence was tossing recklessly about on his bed, alternating between hope and fear—hoping that matters would come out all right after his night's exploit, and fearing that something might happen to defeat his plans—Don was passing the time drearily enough in Godfrey Evans's cellar. The position in which he was confined—he was standing with his back against the stanchion—made it impossible for him to obtain a wink of sleep, and he spent the long, gloomy hours in useless struggles to free himself, and in thinking, not of himself, but of Clarence. How

could his cousin escape the consequences of his rash act, unless he could free himself from his bonds, and reach home before his absence was discovered? This was the question that troubled Don; and whenever it arose in his mind, he would work desperately to free one of his hands, knowing that if that much could be accomplished, he could reach the knife he carried in his pocket, and in two seconds more the rope could be cut into inch pieces. But the knots held, in spite of all his attempts to loosen them, and Don finally gave up in despair, and waited as patiently as he could for daylight, telling himself the while that he had done all he could to save his cousin from exposure, and now Clarence must look out for himself.

The morning came at last, and Don's heart bounded with hope when he saw the first rays of the sun shining through the cracks in the door. He was pretty well tired out by this time, and the cords seemed to have grown tighter about his ankles. He began shouting to attract attention as soon as he thought there was any possibility of making himself heard; and when he grew tired of that, he set up a shrill whistle. That startled somebody. It was Godfrey Evans, who now for the first time became aware that there was some one besides old Jordan tied up in his

cellar. He recognised the whistle the first time he heard it, and almost overwhelmed with amazement and alarm, started off to tell Clarence Gordon of the astounding discovery he had made.

Don whistled at intervals as long and as loudly as his breath would permit—he had grown too hoarse to shout now—and at last, when he had become almost discouraged, he heard hasty steps approaching the cellar. A moment later something bounded down the stairs, and Don saw the nose of one of his hounds thrust under the door.

“Carlo!” he exclaimed, so highly delighted that he could scarcely speak loud enough to make himself heard.

The dog whined in answer, and standing on his hind legs placed his fore feet against the door, which gave away beneath his weight, and the animal bounded into the cellar. Don’s gaze happened to be directed toward the head of the stairs when this occurred, and there he saw his brother Bert, stooping down and looking in.

“Anybody there?” asked Bert, for it was so dark he could not see into the cellar.

“Come here and find out,” said Don.

Bert uttered an ejaculation of astonishment, and

came down the steps in two jumps. All he could see when he entered was the white coat Don wore, but he recognised the voice as he had recognised the whistle.

“Cut the rope first,” exclaimed Don, “and afterward ask as many questions as you please.”

“The rope?” repeated Bert.

“Yes. Come nearer and you will see that I am wrapped up in a plough-line.”

Bert was profoundly astonished, but he wisely refrained from making any inquiries. His knife was out in an instant, and a few passes with the blade liberated Don, who made a feeble attempt to walk and fell forward into his brother's arms.

“Don't be uneasy,” said Don, who knew by the exclamation his brother uttered that he was greatly alarmed. “I'm all right, only I feel as if I had the rheumatism. I've been tied up there ever since nine o'clock last night.”

“Why, Don!” cried Bert. “Who put you there?”

“If I tell you, will you promise not to say a word about it?”

“No, I won't,” replied Bert, quickly. “No one shall treat you so and then go off scot-free if I can—Why, Don, what in the world—I mean how——”

Bert had by this time assisted his brother to the door where he had a fair view of him.

“You mean that if I am your brother, I have changed into a black man during the last few hours, don’t you?” said Don, laughing heartily at the expression of astonishment on Bert’s face. “In me you behold—by the way, you don’t remember old Jordan, do you?”

“No, I do not.”

“Well, I am he ; the identical old nigger !”

“Don,” said Bert, reproachfully, “you didn’t——”

“Yes, I did,” replied Don, as he sat down on the lowest step and stretched his arms and legs. “I am the one who cut up all those shines at the barn, and made the hands think old Jordan had risen from the dead. I am sorry now, but the temptation was so strong I couldn’t resist it. But didn’t I scare everybody, though?”

“But, Don,” said Bert, who could not understand the matter at all, “how came——”

“I know what you want to find out,” said his brother, “and ‘thereby hangs a tale’—a long one, too. I’ll tell it while I am resting.”

With this introduction Don began and told a story that made Bert open his eyes wider than ever. He

related as much of the history of the buried treasure as he had been able to learn, told how he had first found out about it, and gave a glowing description of the plans he had formed to frighten the two conspirators, as he called them. He described minutely all the incidents connected with his capture and confinement in the cellar, and when he told of the coolness and determination with which Clarence had conducted the whole proceeding, Bert's astonishment was almost unbounded.

"That was a joke that was *no* joke," said Don, in conclusion. "The tables were turned on me in a way that would have amused me greatly, had it not been for the fact that I knew Clarence was likely to suffer for what he had done. I didn't care for myself, although I assure you there was no fun in being tied up for almost twelve hours. Where is Clarence now?"

"I left him at the barn, waiting for your horse to be saddled, so that he could start out in search of you. Godfrey was there too, and I heard him promise father that he would look through the woods and see if he could discover any signs of you."

'Did either of them know that they had captured me instead of old Jordan?'

“I heard nothing to indicate the fact.”

“What did the folks have to say about it?”

Bert replied that the folks had had a good deal to say about it, and suggested that if his brother was able to walk to the fence where the pony was hitched they had better start for home at once. The sooner Don got there, the sooner would the anxiety of his mother and sisters be relieved.

“Well, I must face the music some time,” said Don, resignedly, “and I suppose I might as well do it now as an hour later. But I can’t go home in this shape. Help me down to the lake so that I can wash the black off my hands and face.”

It was a matter of no little difficulty for Don to walk so far; but, by Bert’s assistance, he reached the shore of the lake at last, and having taken a long and hearty drink of the water, and washed off the blacking, he felt better. It was while he was thus engaged that Clarence visited the cellar.

After Don had rested a few minutes and refreshed himself with another drink of water, Bert brought up his pony, and his brother managed to climb into the saddle. Bert walked by the pony’s side, and of course had a multitude of questions to ask about things which Don had not thought to mention in his story.

Now, that his surprise and indignation had somewhat abated, he could laugh heartily at his brother's description of his adventures. They met no one while they were on the way home, and Don was glad to find that there was nobody about the barn. He hurried into old Jordan's room, and when he had put on his own clothes, Bert helped him into the house. His mother and sisters met him at the door, and greeted him as though they had not seen him for a year or more. An explanation was at once demanded, but as Marshall was present, Don gave it to his mother in her own room. About the time he finished his father came in, and then the story had to be told over again. Of course the general and his wife were greatly amazed, and they were troubled and perplexed, too. They were troubled because they had expected better things than this of Clarence, and perplexed because they did not know just what ought to be done now. It was plain that Clarence was not a fit associate for any decent boy, and the sooner he was at home, where he belonged, the better it would be for him and Don, too.

"What did they say about it?" asked Bert, as soon as he had a chance to speak to his brother privately.

“They didn’t say much,” was the reply. “Clarence must go home, and that I think will end the matter.”

“Perhaps he is on his way home already,” said Bert. “I know I should start at once if I were in his place. I couldn’t face anybody after an act like that.”

“That is because you have never been guilty of a mean act in your life,” said Don. “One gets hardened to such things after a while. I know it by my experience at school. Probably Clarence has been in more scrapes than you and I ever dreamed of.”

That was not only very probable, but very true; but still he was not sufficiently hardened to face the consequences of this, which was one of the worst scrapes he had ever been in.

Half an hour later, Don’s pony came home riderless. The hostler told the general that he came from toward the landing, and that he had seen Clarence going that way a short time before. Upon hearing this, the general set out at once for Rochdale, where he learned from some of the hangers-on that his nephew had been seen to board the Emma

Deane, and as he had not come off again he must have gone up the river on her. This being the case, there was nothing to be done now but to communicate with his father and await developments.

A few weeks cleared up everything. Clarence had reached his father's house in safety, and the same letter that brought the information, contained also a sum of money sufficient to defray Marshall's expenses to his home. The boy seemed glad to go, and his cousins rarely heard from him afterward.

And what did the general say to Don? Not a word. The latter limped about the house for nearly a week before he was able to sit in the saddle again, and his father wisely concluded that if his night's experience in the cellar had not cured him of his love of practical joking, nothing that he could say would help the matter any. Of course, both the boys were eager to learn the truth concerning the buried treasure, and as soon as Marshall went away, they spoke to their parents about it. Then it came out that either old Jordan had wilfully misrepresented things, which was probable, or else that Godfrey's lively imagination and his great desire to be rich without labor, had led him to magnify the con-

tents of the barrel, which was still more probable. The old negro had certainly buried a barrel on the morning the levee was cut, and it contained silver-ware that, in good times, could have been bought for a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars. The barrel was dug up by another negro as soon as the soldiers were gone, and the most of the silver-ware was in use now, and had been ever since the war. The general thought this a good place to say something the boys would remember. People do sometimes get rich without labor, he said, but their wealth does not, as a rule, last long. To learn the value of money, one must work for it. There is but one sure way to become prosperous, and that is to be industrious, saving and honest. Had Godfrey remembered this, he might have been living at home, a happy and contented man, instead of hiding in the swamp for fear of arrest. The general never thought of having him arrested, and would not have said a word to him if he had met him in the road; but Godfrey knew something that the general didn't know: he had been guilty of highway robbery, and he thought it best to keep out of sight. Of course, he went on from bad to worse—one always does,

unless he grows better every day—and the people in the neighborhood often heard of him after that. Perhaps we also shall hear of him, and of some of our other characters, in the second volume of this series, which will be entitled, **THE BOY TRAPPER.**

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day, after a hard Saturday's work—the other boys had been out skating on the brick-pond—I shyly broached the subject to my mother. I felt the need of some sympathy. She listened in amazement, and then said: “Why, do you think you could write a book like that?” That settled the matter, and from that day no one knew what I was up to until I sent the first four volumes of Gunboat Series to my father. Was it work? Well, yes; it was hard work, but each week I had the satisfaction of seeing the manuscript grow until the “Young Naturalist” was all complete.

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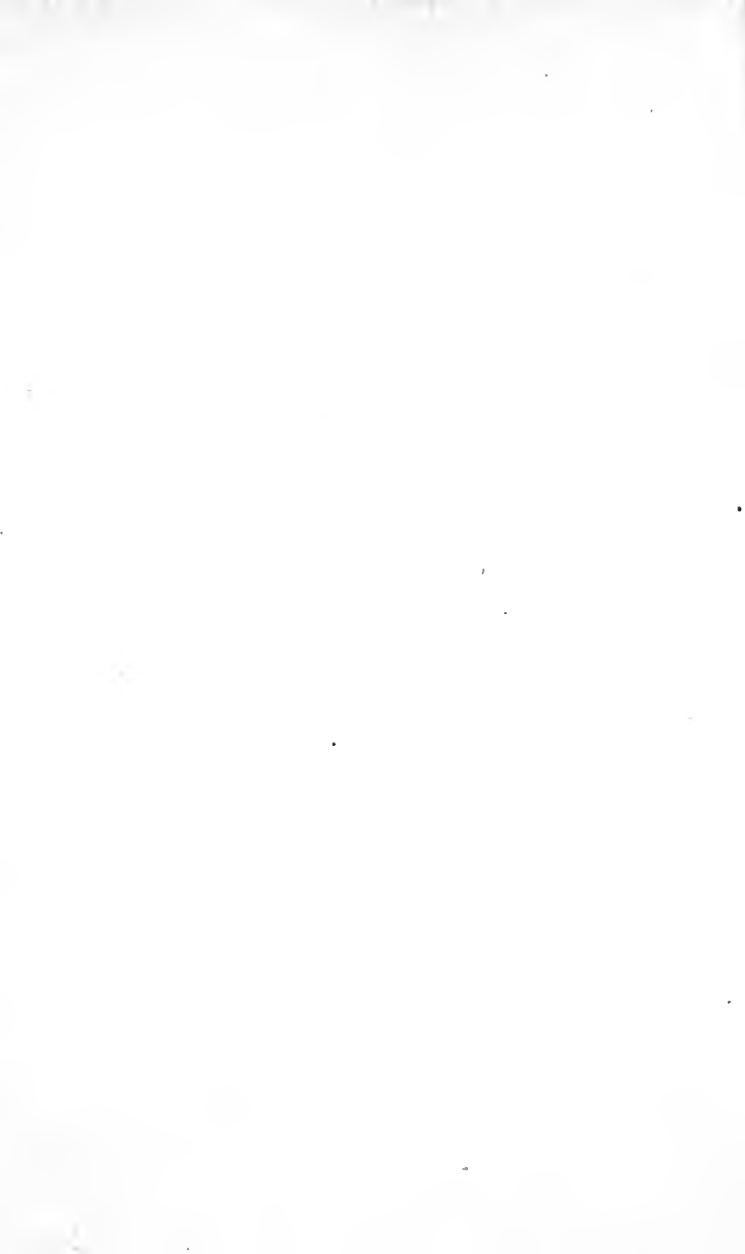
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